

THE ZION CONCEPT IN THE PSALMS AND DEUTERO-ISAIAH

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## ABSTRACT

### Aims of the thesis:

- (a) To analyse the ways in which the Zion concept is used in the Psalter and in Deutero-Isaiah.
- (b) To compare and contrast the ways in which the concept is used.
- (c) To discover the sources used in relation to the concept in each set of texts.
- (d) To discover if there is evidence for the dependence of the one set of texts on the other in relation to this concept.

### Method:

The Zion psalms and the Zion poems of Deutero-Isaiah are critically analysed. In the first part of the study Psalms xlvi, xlviii, lxxvi, lxxxiv, lxxxvii, cxxii, cxxxii and other shorter psalm passages are discussed. Similarly, in the second part, Isaiah xl 1-11, xlix 14- L 3, li 1-23, liv 1-17 and other shorter passages are examined. The findings are summarized at the end of the discussion on each psalm or poem. At the end of the analysis of the Zion psalms the findings from the Psalter are summarized and discussed. A similar summary and discussion follows the section on Deutero-Isaiah. In the final section of the thesis the two sets of results are compared and conclusions are drawn.

### Main conclusions:

- (a) Similarities between the two sets of texts in respect of form, vocabulary and content are sufficiently marked to



warrant the assumption that Deutero-Isaiah was probably familiar with the Zion psalms.

(b) The main differences in the two presentations of the Zion concept are probably the result of the different historical backgrounds, especially related to the city of Jerusalem. The two main differences are: (1) The description of Zion in Deutero-Isaiah, although containing many of the same ingredients as that of the Psalms, is projected into the future. (2) The emphasis in the Psalms is on the city whereas in Deutero-Isaiah it is on Zion as a symbol of the community and as a symbol of the hope of restoration. This symbolism is frequently expressed in personifications of Zion as a woman, the wife of Yahweh and mother of the community.

(c) The Zion psalms were produced for use in the cult but the Zion poems of Deutero-Isaiah, though borrowing liturgical forms, were produced as a prophecy.

(d) Deutero-Isaiah was an original, creative artist who used the ingredients of a past Zion ideology, as well as prophetic and other ideas, to create a new, richer Zion ideology.

(e) It is possible that Deutero-Isaiah was influenced by the presentations of the Zion concept in Isaiah i-xxxix, but the influence of the Zion psalms is more clearly marked.

## Introduction.

The aims of this study are: (a) to analyse the ways in which the Zion concept is used in the Psalter and in Deutero-Isaiah, (b) to compare and contrast the ways in which the concept is used, (c) to discover the sources used in relation to the concept in each set of texts, (d) to discover if there is evidence for the dependence of the one set of texts on the other in relation to this concept.

The passages to be studied have been selected on the basis of one main criterion which is, simply, a use of, and interest in, the Zion concept. Some passages which have been chosen may not mention "Zion" as such, but the content shows, either by the mention of Jerusalem or by the terms used, that "Zion" is, in effect, one of the centres of interest in these passages. The relationship between "Zion" and "Jerusalem" is not fixed. In some texts "Jerusalem" is clearly the city, while "Zion" is equally clearly the holy mountain. In other texts "Zion" is defined as the city, "Jerusalem". Yet again, both "Zion" and "Jerusalem" are used as terms to define the community of the chosen people or are personified. It is impossible to study the Zion concept without at the same time studying passages which concern Jerusalem and without taking these different usages into account.

With regard to the Psalter, seven psalms have been classified as Zion psalms. These are: xlvi, xlviii, lxxvi, lxxxiv, lxxxvii, cxxii and cxxxii. The same psalms could also be classified in other categories, but they all have in common a strong interest in Zion and, therefore, it

is fair to classify them as Zion psalms. Of course, many other psalms use the Zion concept and these, too, will be studied. The analysis of the Zion concept in the psalms constitutes the first half of the study.

As far as Deutero-Isaiah is concerned, a number of fairly lengthy poems are classified as Zion poems, either because they are addressed to Zion or because their content is closely related to Zion. These are: xl 1-11, xlix 14-L 3, li 1-23, lii 1-12 and liv 1-17. Several briefer passages concerned with Zion are also discussed. The study of the Zion concept in Deutero-Isaiah constitutes the second part of the study.

At the end of each of these major parts of the study there is a concluding discussion which summarizes and coordinates all that has been discovered about the Zion concept in that part. The third part of the study is a final discussion comparing the uses of the Zion concept in the two sets of texts and listing the conclusions drawn from this comparison.

## PART I

### THE ZION CONCEPT IN THE PSALMS

Psalm xlvii

1. To the choirmaster: belonging to the sons of  
Korah; according to the Alamoth; a song.
2. God is for us refuge and strength,  
timely indeed with help in affliction.
3. Therefore we will not fear when the earth changes  
and the mountains shake in the heart of the sea:
4. though its floods flux and foam  
and the mountains quake before his majesty.  
Selah.
5. There is a river whose courses delight the city of God,  
the holy dwelling of the Highest.
6. God is in her midst; she shall never fall;  
God will help her - and it will be soon!
7. Nations rage; kingdoms fail;  
he raises his voice - the earth dissolves.
8. The Lord of hosts is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our safe resort.  
Selah.
9. Come and behold the acts of the Lord,  
what havoc he has caused on the earth.
10. He abolishes war to the ends of the earth;  
he shatters the bow and smashes the spear;  
he burns the shield in the fire.
11. Pause then, and ponder that I am God,  
raised high over the nations, raised high above  
the earth.

12. The Lord of hosts is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our safe resort.

Selah.

Verse 1, Title.

Psalm 46, like fifty four others in the psalter, is described as being  $\overline{\text{לְשׁוֹן}} \overline{\text{הַמְּדִינָה}}$ . There are three main ways of interpreting this ascription. LXX, for example, presupposes  $\overline{\text{לְשׁוֹן}} \overline{\text{הַמְּדִינָה}}$ , translating  $\text{Εἰς τὸ τέλος}$  (cf. Vulgate's "in finem"), which could mean that the psalm was designed for use at the eschaton. However, this does not accord with M.T. Secondly, on the basis of the root meaning of the verb  $\overline{\text{לְשׁוֹן}}$  (to shine), and repointing  $\overline{\text{לְשׁוֹן}} \overline{\text{הַמְּדִינָה}}$ , Mowinckel concludes that the phrase refers to causing the face of God to shine and, therefore, means "for propitiation" (cf. Ex. xxxii 11).<sup>1</sup> This, however, is rather speculative. Thirdly, and probably correctly, Oesterley and others deduce that the root meaning "shine" came to mean "pre-eminent" and, therefore, one who acts as overseer. Further, in 1 Chron. xv 21 the word  $\overline{\text{לְשׁוֹן}} \overline{\text{הַמְּדִינָה}}$  refers to leading music. Thus, the word here probably means "choirmaster" or "precentor".<sup>2,3</sup>

Psalm 46 is one of a number of psalms which bear the designation, "Belonging to the sons of Korah". It can be

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1. Mowinckel, P.I.W. I, p. 212.

2. Oesterley, The Psalms I, pp. 10-11; cf. Kirkpatrick, The Psalms, Introduction, p. xxi.

3. B.D.B. (p. 664) accepts the meaning "choirmaster", but K.B. (p. 197) suggests that it may be a musical term.

agreed with Wanke that Psalms 42-49, 84, 85, 87 and 88, which are all Korahite Psalms, belonged originally to one collection.<sup>1</sup> It is more difficult to agree with his thesis that a group of Korahites in the 4th Century B.C. added distinctive theological ideas to some of these psalms. The argument against Wanke's position is fully set out in Appendix 3.

According to the narrative in Numbers, the original Korah, great grandson of Levi, died for his part in the rebellion against Moses; yet, some of his sons survived (cf. Num. xvi, xxvi 11). The Korahites guarded the Levite camp and David's sacred tent (cf. 1 Chron. ix 17ff., xxvi 1ff.). They were also gate-keepers of the temple (cf. Neh. xi 19). There is also a strong tradition that connects the Korahites with the temple cult as singers and musicians (cf. 1 Chron. vi 31-33, xxv 4ff., 2 Chron. xx 19). It is difficult to assess the value of these references to Korahites. There is scanty evidence to show that they were psalm writers. It is more likely that they were compilers, probably before the Exile, for in the post-Exilic period they appear as door keepers rather than as musicians.<sup>2</sup> (See further below in the Excursus following the discussion of Psalm 84.)

The phrase  $\eta\eta\eta\eta\eta - \eta\eta$  has been variously interpreted. Eaton, for example, concludes that the reference is to the mysteries of the liturgy.<sup>3</sup> This interpretation follows LXX

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1. Wanke, D.Z.D.K., pp. 23ff.

2. See Kirkpatrick, The Psalms, pp. 223-5.

3. Eaton, Psalms, p. 127.

(ὕπὲρ τῶν κρυφίων) and is based on the assumption that  $\text{תִּמְלֵךְ}$  is derived from the root  $\text{קִלַּע}$  (conceal).<sup>1</sup> Weiser believes the term refers to the key on which the song was sung.<sup>2</sup> There is some support for the argument that this is a musical direction in the use of the phrase in 1 Chron. xv 20, where harpists are described as playing according to  $\text{תִּמְלֵךְ}$ . Yet, there is the same ambiguity in that passage as there is in the psalm title. It would be possible to follow Symmachus in reading  $\text{תִּמְלֵךְ}$ , except that  $\text{תִּמְלֵךְ}$  as in Psalm cxlv 13 is the usual plural of  $\text{תִּמְלֵךְ}$ . Kirkpatrick and others conclude that the phrase refers to women's, boys' or soprano voices.<sup>3</sup> This assumes that  $\text{תִּמְלֵךְ}$  is the plural of  $\text{תִּמְלֵךְ}$  (young woman). In fact, there is no firm basis for any of these interpretations. It is probably best to follow R.S.V. by transliterating "Alamoth", bearing in mind that the word may possibly be some kind of musical direction.

#### Verses 2-4

This section describes God's reliability as a source of strength even in the face of the primeval chaos of natural forces.

V. 2 sets the tone for the theme of the psalm which is

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1. Cf. K.B. p. 749; B.D.B. p. 761.

2. Weiser, The Psalms, pp. 365ff.

3. See Kirkpatrick, op.cit., pp. 253ff.; Delitzsch, The Psalms II, pp. 106-10.



that God is a strong support for his people in troubled times. The use of the word  $\text{בְּיָמָיו}$ , associated with  $\text{יָמָיו}$ , anticipates the imagery of vv. 5-6 where the city of God is described as immovable in the face of political threats.

$\text{בְּיָמָיו}$ , from the verb  $\text{בָּיַן}$  (seek refuge), is used fairly frequently in the psalms for God as the refuge of his people.<sup>1</sup>  $\text{יָמָיו}$  could be derived from the root  $\text{יָמַן}$  and, like  $\text{יָמָיו}$ , mean "safety" or "protection". Gunkel, giving Zuflucht, accepts this derivation.<sup>2</sup> However, the word is more likely to be derived from  $\text{יָמַן}$  (be strong), giving the meaning "strength".<sup>3</sup> In some texts  $\text{יָמָיו}$  is closely associated with the ark, as in Psalm cxxxii 8 in which the words  $\text{יָמָיו יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ}$  appear. (See the commentary on that passage.) Also, Psalm lxxviii 61 states that God "delivered his "strength" to captivity, an undoubted reference to the ark. Johnson would go further and claim that the ark was equated with God's presence.<sup>4</sup> In view of the refrain in Psalm xlvi 8 and 12, where the Lord of hosts is mentioned, it is possible that there are indirect references to the ark both in  $\text{יָמָיו}$  and in the title, "Lord of Hosts". However, as far as  $\text{יָמָיו}$  is concerned, any such reference is probably secondary.

The words  $\text{יָמָיו אֱלֹהֵינוּ}$  are translated by N.E.B., "a timely (help in trouble)", and by Gunkel, gewaltig erfunden.<sup>5</sup> These are fairly typical of English and German

1. See B.B.D., p. 340.

2. Gunkel, Die Psalmen, p. 200.

3. See B.D.B., pp. 738-9.

4. Johnson, The One and the Many, pp. 19ff.

5. Op.cit., p. 197.

translations. On the basis of the meaning of  $\text{נִסָּח}$  in 1 Chron. xxiv 4 and 2 Chron. ii 16, it is possible to accept that the word can mean here "prove to be".<sup>1</sup>

Alternatively, the niph'al may express "actions which the subject allows to happen to himself". In this case, the sense would be that God "allowed himself to be found".<sup>2</sup> This is a good basis for the meaning suggested by N.E.B. and has been accepted.

In vv. 3-4 the physical world of mountains and seas is pictured as being in a chaotic state.

$\text{הִיחַיִּיל}$  is probably an infinitive construct, "internal" hiph'il (intransitive) with the meaning "change" as translated by R.S.V. This makes sense and it seems unnecessary to emend the text to  $\text{הִיחַיִּיל}$  with Gunkel<sup>3</sup> and Oesterley<sup>4</sup> or to  $\text{הִיחַיִּיל}$  with Briggs.<sup>5</sup>

Gaster translates the verse, "Therefore will we not fear though God rock the earth, and though the mountains reel, our hearts will not melt". He emends  $\text{לֹא יִמָּוֶת לִבֵּנוֹ}$  to  $\text{לֹא יִמָּוֶת לִבֵּנוֹ}$ .<sup>6</sup> This, however, is too radical an alteration of the text to be acceptable.

The imagery in this section could simply refer to an earthquake, though this is unlikely. Alternatively, it could have some relation to the typical theophanic imagery associated with Mount Sinai, though this is not probable,

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1. See B.D.B., p. 594.

2. See G.K., 51c.

3. Loc. cit.

4. Oesterley, The Psalms I, pp. 254-7.

5. Briggs, The Psalms I, pp. 393-5.

6. Gaster, Expository Times, LXXI 1960, p. 287.

for the description lacks some of the traditional images (cf. Ex. xix 16-20, Psalm xviii 7-15). The most likely explanation is that here there is a survival in Israelite literature of the Babylonian creation myth. There are many texts throughout the Old Testament where this survival of myth is even more explicit (cf. Job iii 8, Psalm lxxiv 12-14, Is. xxvii 1ff.). In the later Genesis account of creation (Chap. i), the picture has been almost entirely demythologized, although Yahweh's power over chaos is still manifest. In the original account, Marduk (or Baal in the Canaanite myth) was victorious over the sea-monster Tiamat, variously named Leviathan, Rahab or simply "the dragon". After the conquest of the powers of chaos the god created the world. In Psalm xlvi the monster is not mentioned but the mythical flavour is unmistakable. At any rate, the description here is meant to illustrate God's power in nature and creation.<sup>1</sup>

Wanke maintains that the "chaos" theme derives from the Canaanite rather than the Babylonian myth. This may be so. However, he further argues that the theme made a late appearance in Israelite thought, maintaining that such passages as Is. xxvii 1, L 2, li 9, Ezek. xxix 3, xxxii 2 are late; but he does not adequately account for the theme's appearance in Psalms lxxiv, lxxxix, xciii and civ, not all of which can be post-Exilic. In any case, it is difficult to believe that if the theme was current in Ugarit in 1400 B.C. it did not appear in Israel till a thousand

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1. See Mowinckel, H.T.C., pp. 25-6.

years after.<sup>1</sup> It is more credible, as Mowinckel and Johnson show, that the theme of the recreation of the cosmos was closely related to the idea of Yahweh's Kingship, and that the liturgy of the autumn festival presented both themes through this and other psalms,<sup>2</sup> (cf. Psalms xciii-c).

To insert the "refrain" after v. 4 but before <sup>750</sup> would repeat the pattern of vv. 8 and 12. It is possible that it has been omitted accidentally.

### Verses 5-8

In this section God is described as present in his city which, because of his presence, is immovable, despite the onslaught of the nations. Thus, there is a move of thought towards the political sphere, though the cosmic theme still appears. The general terms in which the passage is written, the description of the river and its blessings in v. 5 and the reference back to the conquest of chaos in v. 7, all seem to support a mythical origin rather than a historical one, but the strands of thought are difficult to separate.

The river described in v. 5 has been the cause of much speculation. Firstly, attempts have been made to identify a geographical river. These have not been very successful. Because of its small size the spring Gihon is not a convincing candidate. Nor is a reference to "the waters of

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1. Wanke, D.Z.D.K., pp. 68-70. See Appendix 2 for a critique of Wanke's position.

2. Mowinckel, H.T.C., pp. 50ff., 71ff., 85ff.  
Johnson, S.K., pp. 113ff., 134ff.

Shiloah" in Is. viii 6 as cited by Kirkpatrick a very satisfactory explanation.<sup>1</sup> Attempts to associate the river with a Jebusite water shaft or with Hezekiah's tunnel are no more convincing.<sup>2</sup> An attempt by Barnes to equate the river with the Euphrates and hence with the Assyrian power becomes very forced when he explains Jerusalem's gladness as relief at not being overwhelmed by the Assyrians<sup>3</sup> (cf. Is. viii 7, xi 15).

It seems necessary, therefore, to ascribe symbolic meaning to the river. Such a meaning is best provided by the second school of thought which equates the river with the mythical river of paradise. Kraus argues for the influence of Canaanite and Jebusite ideas, pointing out that in the Ras Shamra texts El dwells at the source of the streams of paradise.<sup>4</sup> This general argument, as supported by Clements,<sup>5</sup> is quite convincing, although a specific reference to El need not be part of the argument. There are certainly many Old Testament texts to support this theory, not least in importance the description of paradise in Gen. ii 10-14 where the four rivers are the Pishon, the Gihon, the Tigris and the Euphrates. The odd geography of this description need not detract from the theory of the mythical fertilizing river. The prevalence of the river of paradise theme in Old Testament thought is

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1. Kirkpatrick, The Psalms, pp. 256ff.

2. Briggs, The Psalms I, pp. 395-6.

3. Barnes, The Psalms II, p. 229.

4. Kraus, Psalmen I, pp. 339-47.

5. Clements, God and Temple, pp. 71-2.

shown by the references in Ezek. xlvii to the fertilizing river which would issue from below the threshold of the temple; in Is. xxxiii 21 to Zion as a place of broad rivers and streams; in Joel iii 18 to the fountain coming out of the house of the Lord; and in Zech. xiv 8 to the living waters flowing out of Jerusalem (cf. Rev. xxii 1).

Johnson also supports this general view, claiming that the river is a current of the cosmic sea which nourishes the holy city. This is illustrated by the "waters of Shiloah that flow gently" in Is. viii 6. Moreover, in the description of the king's sovereignty in Psalm lxxii 8, the river is not geographical, but is cosmic as here, showing that the king's domain covered the "wide circle of the earth".<sup>1</sup>

Gunkel sees the river as representing the fulness and blessings of life at the eschaton.<sup>2</sup> This river is related to Mount Zion, the transfigured world mountain, and to Jerusalem viewed through enraptured eyes as they will be at the end of time. Gunkel is right when he claims that eschatological elements are present, but the description of the river is far less sophisticated here than, for example, in Ezek. xlvii, and is not associated with the Day of the Lord as in Joel iii 18 and Zech. xiv 8. This seems to suggest that there was a development from the simple to the more complex in eschatological ideas. The question of eschatology is more fully discussed below.

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1. Johnson, S.K., pp. 10ff., 93ff.

2. Gunkel, Die Psalmen, pp. 197ff.

Wanke admits that the paradise river theme as it appears in Psalm xlvi existed before the exile in creation mythology, but he argues that the theme was not applied to Jerusalem until post-Exilic times when it was borrowed by the psalmist from eschatological prophecy.<sup>1</sup> It is true that the theme is not applied to Jerusalem elsewhere in pre-Exilic literature, unless Is. xxxiii is considered as belonging to that category. (But cf. Psalm lxxv 10 and the note on Psalm lxxvii 1.) Yet, as noted above, it would be more natural for the more complex eschatological prophecies to depend on Psalm xlvi than vice versa. Further, the theme was certainly current in pre-Exilic times and could easily have been applied to Jerusalem. Indeed, it would be extremely surprising if this theme, together with the holy mountain and chaos struggle themes, had not been applied to Jerusalem, the place of God's dwelling, before the Exile.

Another dimension of the "river of blessing" theory may be hinted at in 1 Kings vii 23-26 in the description of the bronze sea. This may be symbolic of the cosmic sea which God supposedly kept under control and which was the source of all the earth's rain and rivers, thus providing fertility. The river of v. 5 could then be in direct contrast to the watery chaos of vv. 2-4.

Two other important factors need to be mentioned. The first is that the river need not be interpreted as giving

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1. Wanke, D.Z.D.K., pp. 67-8.



only spiritual blessings, for in Israelite thought the blessings brought by God's presence included material prosperity. Secondly, the fact that the complex of thought implied in the description of the river may owe its origin to pre-Israelite myths, does not mean that the symbol is merely a vehicle for mythical concepts. The symbol as adapted by Israel underwent a "sea change" and developed into a deep and lasting sign of God's grace.

The "city of God" is certainly Jerusalem. Mount Zion is not mentioned here but, as Psalm xlvi<sup>iii</sup> 3 shows is so closely related as to be almost inseparable from the city. However, a full discussion of the "holy mountain" concept is undertaken with reference to Psalm xlvi<sup>iii</sup>. Other aspects of the city are discussed elsewhere: for example, the concept of a universal city is more appropriately discussed with reference to Psalm lxxxvii.

Why is Jerusalem here referred to as God's city and why was it regarded as the place on earth where God lived? The joint election of the Davidic house and of Zion/Jerusalem as the dwelling place of God are well attested in Psalm cxxxii 11-14 and Psalm lxxviii 67-72. The moving of the ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam. vi) and the erection of an altar on the threshing floor purchased from Araunah the Jebusite (2 Sam. xxiv), the site of the later temple, both contributed towards the idea that Jerusalem was a sacred place. The use of the name 'Elyon for God probably indicates that the city was sacred for the Jebusites and that there was a transfer of ideas from Canaanite culture



to Yahwism, but this factor must not be exaggerated.<sup>1</sup> El 'Elyon, one of a number of names for God combined with El in the Bible, was associated with Jerusalem from the earliest times (cf. Gen. xiv 17-20). Thus, even before David, the city would have been regarded as a dwelling place for a god.

The temple, of course, was more specifically regarded as God's dwelling place and God's presence was especially associated with the cherubim above the ark which was kept in the inner sanctuary (cf. Is. vi 1-2, Ex. xxv 10-22). God's dwelling place on earth was probably regarded as a copy of his dwelling place in heaven. The cosmic symbol of the bronze sea supports this idea (cf. 1 Kings vii 23-26) and the two temples of heaven and earth may have been regarded as sharing identity<sup>2</sup> (cf. Psalm xiv 2, 7). There is also a Jewish tradition that the temple contained the foundation stone of the world and that under this "shetiyah" stone the chaos floods were kept in check<sup>3</sup> (cf. Psalm xxix 10-11). Further, the temple was often regarded as the centre and navel of the earth (cf. Ezek. xxxviii 12). Burrows quotes Babylonian parallels for this, the principal temple there being named "E-temen-an-ki", which means "the temple of the foundation of heaven and earth". (See further under Psalm xlviii.) The cornerstone of Zion in Is. xxviii 16 may be

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1. See Roberts, J.B.L., XCII 1973, pp. 329-344, who warns against too great an emphasis on the influence of the Jebusite cultus.
  2. Clements, op.cit., p. 65.
  3. Patai, Man and Temple, pp. 57-8.

a development of this idea.<sup>1</sup> At any rate, Jerusalem and its temple, both regarded as God's dwelling place, are frequent themes in the psalms (cf. xxvi 8, L 2, lxxv 1, lxxiv 2, lxxvi 2, lxxxiv 7).

וְיָ֑דָהּ in v. 5, as pointed, is the construct of וְיָ֑דָהּ (holy) and seems to be descriptive of יְיָ֑וָדָהּ. R.S.V. follows this interpretation by translating, "the holy habitation of the Most High". N.E.B., on the other hand, translates, "which the Most High has made his holy dwelling". This follows LXX which reads ἡ γίγασε τὸ σκήνωμα αὐτοῦ, presupposing וָיָ֑דָהּ (waw for yodh). LXX also implies a pi'el verb, וְיָ֑דָהּ. On the whole, it is probably best to accept M.T. and follow R.S.V.

In v. 6 the theory of the inviolability of Zion is presented in its basic form. God dwells in Zion/Jerusalem: therefore, nothing can move the city. This ideology is presented in Isaiah i-xxxix in fuller form and the relation of these chapters to the psalms is discussed in Appendix 2 (cf. Is. x 24-34, xiv 24-32, xvii 12-14, xxix 1-8, xxx 27-33).

Hayes argues for a pre-Israelite origin of this concept, maintaining that there are survivals of earlier cultic elements in Psalms xlvi, xlvi and lxxvi.<sup>2</sup> Clements also argues for a Jebusite concept of the inviolability of the city.<sup>3</sup> The fact that the city was a kingdom in its own right (cf. Gen. xiv 8) and that it was regarded as an impregnable fortress

1. Burrows, The Labyrinth, (ed. Hooke), pp. 45-70.

2. Hayes, J.B.L., LXXXII 1963, pp. 419-26.

3. Op.cit., p. 11.

(cf. 2 Sam. v 6) support this idea. If this indeed was the case, other more important factors probably reinforced the earlier tradition. The ark, by its association with the presence of Yahweh as Lord of hosts (cf. vv. 8 and 12), the Israelite election tradition and the hundreds of years during which Jerusalem was never captured, all probably gave rise to the notion that Jerusalem would always be safe in God's hands.

The time that God would help the city is given as רָגַל הַיּוֹם, variously translated as "at the break of day" (N.E.B.), "right early" (R.S.V.) and da der Morgen naht (Gunkel). The last named scholar believes that there is an allusion to God's destruction of the Egyptian army "when the morning appeared" in Ex. xiv 27.<sup>1</sup> This, however, seems rather forced. Kirkpatrick believes the phrase is a reference to the morning when Sennacherib's army was found to be destroyed.<sup>2</sup> Such an interpretation is not given sufficient support by the text. Weiser maintains that the reference is metaphorical, as in the English expression, "the darkest hour before the dawn".<sup>3</sup> Such a view is feasible. Adherents of the cultic interpretation of the psalm would propose that a dawn ceremony took place in which the cultic battle was resolved by Yahweh's appearance at daybreak.<sup>4</sup> This view is interesting but speculative.

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1. Gunkel, Die Psalmen, pp. 197-201.

2. Kirkpatrick, The Psalms, pp. 256ff.

3. Weiser, The Psalms, pp. 369ff.

4. Johnson, S.K., pp. 72ff. on Psalm xlvi.

A simpler and more convincing explanation is that Yahweh gave help with the immediacy demanded by the danger to his city.

V. 7 portrays the nations raging and being defeated by Yahweh's utterance. The language is elliptical and the short, sharp phrases seem to encompass the world of men and the sphere of nature in one brief thrust of God's illimitable power. In this verse the political scene and the primeval chaos are fused into one and God is victorious over both.

The theme of the defeat of the nations, which is briefly mentioned here, is more fully described in Psalm xlvi 5-8. The main discussion about the interpretation of the theme, therefore, is to be found in situ under Psalm xlvi. It may be stated briefly here that eschatological, cultic, historical or literary interpretations are all possible; but that a combination of the historical, in a generalized sense, with the literary and cultic, is most probable.

The traditional mode of Yahweh's deliverance is summarized in the bare statement, "... he raises his voice...". A fuller picture of the theophany is given in Psalm xlvii 7-15 where smoke, fire, thunder and lightning accompany Yahweh's appearance. This imagery seems to rely on the Sinai tradition which, together with the tradition of Yahweh as a warlord manifesting himself with the ark of the covenant, may have been joined to the Zion tradition at an early date. There is no need to see the Zion tradition as

a separate entity. The bringing of the ark to Jerusalem surely shows that David was aware of the early traditions of the confederation of tribes. While it is true that after the division of the kingdoms the northern kingdom tended to preserve the tradition of the tribal league, this does not mean that the Jerusalem tradition did not contain some of its elements.

The word  $\text{עָרָא}$  is a very significant one, being used in vv. 3, 7, 9, 10 and 11. Kelly rightly maintains that this is a key word connected with the essential unity of the psalm.<sup>1</sup> In vv. 2-6  $\text{עָרָא}$  refers to the natural world, whereas in vv. 9-11 it seems to refer to the universal city or to the whole world of nations; at the same time retaining both dimensions of meaning in v. 7. This is a sound analysis.

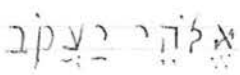
Clements perceives other equally valid dimensions in  $\text{עָרָא}$ .<sup>2</sup> It can, he claims, be used in a local or universal sense to apply either to the land or to the world. These represent the immanent and transcendent aspects of God's nature. God is immanent on the local mountain as represented by  $\text{עָרָא}$  and also transcendent on the gigantic world mountain or universe as represented again by  $\text{עָרָא}$ . This question is further discussed under Psalm xlviii.

The formula of v. 8, with its use of the phrase  $\text{הָיָה הָיָה הָיָה}$ , supports the contention that the ark became enshrined as an important aspect of the Zion tradition. It is difficult to agree with Wanke that the title is used

1. Kelly, J.B.L., LXXXIX 1970, pp. 305ff.

2. Clements, God and Temple, pp. 2-3.

here without conscious connection with the ark. He claims that the divine name was not handed down in the pre-Exilic cult tradition but was used only in a general way.<sup>1</sup> This is to argue that, whereas we are conscious of the name's origin and connotation, the Israelites themselves were not. Further, Wanke ignores the fact that the ark was kept in the sanctuary continuously from the time of David and that the name would, therefore, be continuously associated with the ark and the cult. This is not to deny that there was development in the meaning of the name which originally referred to the God who led the armies into battle, but later became associated with the "host of heaven" (cf. Gen. ii 1, 1 Kings xxii 19). One of the earliest uses of the phrase is by Hannah in 1 Sam. i 11.

 is another title for God with an ancient lineage. Barnes interprets the word "Jacob" as "he who overcomes".<sup>2</sup> This is rather a strained interpretation. It is better to conclude that the title bears direct reference to the patriarch. No doubt patriarchal tradition became part of the Jerusalem tradition. Wanke argues that the name here refers to the Israel community and that this is a sign of the late date of the psalm.<sup>3</sup> It is true that the word Jacob often refers to the community, but it must be remembered that ambiguity would always be present and, in any case, that the name originated with the patriarch. It is certainly a dubious argument to put forward the use of

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1. Wanke, D.Z.D.K., pp. 40ff.

2. Barnes, The Psalms II, pp. 229ff.

3. Op.cit., pp. 54ff.

this title as supporting evidence for a late date.

### Verses 9-12

These verses picture the final outcome of the divine victory. Weapons of war are shattered, all wars are ended and God rules over the nations. If a historical interpretation is taken, what is described is "the war to end all wars" which must, as always, have led to disappointment. It is much more likely that this is an early version of the eschatological hope, which is not an anachronism, for the classical prophets contain similar descriptions (cf. Is. ix 2-7, Hos. ii 18, Mic. iv 1-4).

Because of the phrase  $\text{לִיְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ}$  in v. 9 Eaton believes that a cultic prophet spoke these verses.<sup>1</sup> The assumption is that there was a spectacle to behold. However, the invitation may be rhetorical rather than indicative of a cultic act.

The desolations (  $\text{שִׁמּוֹן}$  ) of the earth are what would be expected after a decisive world war. There is no need to follow Dahood, who tries to produce a better parallelism by equating the word with the Ugaritic smt (oil or fat), so translating fertility.<sup>2</sup> The text makes sound sense as it stands.

In v. 10  $\text{אֲנִי־אֶמְצָא־כָּרֶת}$  as pointed means "carts" and R.S.V. accepts this, giving "chariots". Barnes, on the basis of

1. Eaton, Psalms, p. 128.

2. Dahood, The Psalms I, pp. 280-1.



the root idea of *ḥay* (going round), pictures a circle of wagons in a defensive position.<sup>1</sup> An alternative pointing is presupposed by LXX's *Θυγεῶνς*. Vulgate and N.E.B. also translate "shields", assuming that the word is *ḥiṣṣay*. German translations also vary between Schilde and die Wagen.<sup>2</sup> On the whole "shields" makes the best parallel. It is possible that they were made of strong leather and could, therefore, have been inflammable.

The question arises as to whether the universalism of v.11 was conceivable before the Exile. The passages from the classical prophets quoted above support a pre-Exilic date for this concept, unless indeed, all such references are post-Exilic insertions, which is not very likely. In any case, the enthronement psalms claims that Yahweh's reign is universal (cf. xcvi 10, xcvii 9, xcvi 2-3).

### General Comments

Mowinckel believes that there are two main types of hymns of praise.<sup>3</sup> The first is general and is based on Yahweh's eternal nature and his mighty acts. The second is more specific and depicts a single act of salvation. Psalm xlvi, claims Mowinckel, falls into the second category. Westermann divides the psalms of praise into two

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1. Barnes, The Psalms II, p. 230.

2. See Gunkel, Die Psalmen, p. 197 and Kraus, Psalmen I, p. 339, respectively.

3. Mowinckel, P.I.W., pp. 85ff.



broad types.<sup>1</sup> These are descriptive of God's nature and actions and declarative of God's saving acts. Under this system Psalm xlvii would probably be defined as a declarative psalm of praise. Anderson,<sup>2</sup> Kraus<sup>3</sup> and Wanke<sup>4</sup> all note that the psalm has some of the characteristics of the psalm of confidence. At the same time, the psalm bears the hallmark of that complex of thought sometimes referred to as the Zion hymn. Gunkel believes that the psalm has prophetic ingredients and labels it as an eschatological Zion song.<sup>5</sup> For the purposes of this study, bearing in mind that categorization is not a simple matter, the psalm will be defined as a Zion hymn. The Zion hymns are mentioned as such in Psalm cxxxvii 3.

The metre of the psalm is mainly made up of distichoi with three or four stresses to each stichos, though there are some irregularities. It is convenient to divide the psalm into three sections as follows:

- (a) vv. 2-4. Yahweh's sovereignty over the universe and over chaos.
- (b) vv. 5-8. The security of Zion and the repelling of God's enemies.
- (c) vv. 9-12. Yahweh's victory and his universal reign of peace.

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1. Westermann, P.G.P., pp. 31ff., p. 157.

2. Anderson, Peake's Commentary, 369d.

3. Kraus, Psalmen I, pp. 339-47.

4. Wanke, D.Z.D.K., pp. 10ff.

5. Loc. cit.

There are various ways of interpreting the psalm. First of all, some commentators maintain that the psalm has a specific historical background. Delitzsch, for example, on the basis of 2 Chron. xx, gives the background as the invasion by Moab, Edom and Ammon during the reign of Jehoshaphat.<sup>1</sup> Barnes dates the psalm in the time of Hezekiah during the Assyrian invasion.<sup>2</sup> He believes the earthquake in the time of Uzziah may account for the ingredients of vv. 2-4. Further, the river of vv. 5-8 may be related to the Assyrian power as in Is. viii 7-8. Also, the concept of Zion's inviolability in v. 6, he maintains, favours the period of Isaiah of Jerusalem. Yet another suggestion is that of Briggs who suggests that the psalm is a national song of the time of Josiah.<sup>3</sup> Arguments for a historical interpretation are quite convincing, but it is likely that any historical influence was general rather than specific, the description in the psalm being the detritus of some centuries of experience.

Secondly, some scholars interpret the psalm as eschatological. Gunkel and Oesterley both take this view.<sup>4</sup> The defeat of the nations, the desolation of the world and God's reign of universal peace are certainly typical ingredients of eschatology but it is doubtful if there is a

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1. Delitzsch, The Psalms II, pp. 106-10.

2. Barnes, The Psalms II, pp. 227-8.

3. Briggs, The Psalms I, pp. 393-5.

4. Gunkel, Die Psalmen, pp. 197ff.; Oesterley, The Psalms I, pp. 254-7.

fully developed eschatology in this psalm. Definition of eschatology is notoriously difficult. However, this passage probably falls into Vriezen's category of "awakening" eschatology.<sup>1</sup> What makes such proto-eschatology distinct from Exilic and post-Exilic eschatology is probably a matter of degrees of intensity and complexity rather than of items of content. As Vriezen notes of the later period, "The Kingdom of God is not only seen coming in visions but is experienced as coming".<sup>2</sup>

A third way of interpreting the psalm is to see it in its cultic setting. Johnson and Eaton, for example, propose that the themes presented were brought together as a "back-cloth" for ritual actions like the enthronement of Yahweh and a dramatic presentation of a cultic battle.<sup>3</sup> Weiser, similarly, proposes that the psalm presents a cultic theophany and a dramatic presentation of the Heilsgeschichte.<sup>4</sup> Kraus, claiming that the psalm is based on ideas from a pre-Israelite cult tradition, believes that it is to be understood in the context of a Proskynese before the divine King, Yahweh being the real centre of praise.<sup>5</sup> There is an inherent probability in these theories which is difficult to deny, except that the exact form of any ritual is not easy to outline. Even so, the historical and cultic inter-

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1. Vriezen, An Outline of O.T. Theology, p. 368.

2. Loc. cit.

3. Johnson, S.K., pp. 72ff. Eaton, Psalms, p. 127.

4. Weiser, The Psalms, pp. 365ff.

5. Kraus, Psalmen I, pp. 339-47.

pretations are not mutually exclusive. The psalm could have been part of a liturgy but could still have been inspired by events in Israel's history.

As to the Sitz im Leben of the psalm, general probability favours its use at the main festival of the year, that is to say, at the Feast of Tabernacles. Such a view is supported by the theme of blessing in v. 5 and by the idea of God as ruler of the nations in v. 11. These two themes together connect the psalm with the main harvest and with the new year.

Weiser sees a development of thought in the three sections of the psalm.<sup>1</sup> He maintains that the first section refers to Yahweh and creation, the second to Yahweh's control over history and the third to Yahweh as eschatological king of the nations. Perhaps such a theory makes too neat a package of the psalm, but there is some truth in this analysis.

#### Aspects of the Zion concept presented in the psalm.


1. The cosmic river is a source of blessings for Zion-Jerusalem (v. 5).
2. Zion-Jerusalem is God's city and dwelling place (v. 5).
3. Because of God's presence Zion-Jerusalem will never fall (v. 6).

#### Associated themes indirectly related to the Zion concept.

1. God is in control of the chaos which is liable to threaten the physical world (vv. 3-4).

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1. Loc. cit.

2. Yahweh is also in control of the nations. This theme is associated with the chaos theme (v. 7).
3. The word  is a central concept with local and universal meanings. These are equivalent to the local mountain and the world mountain which represent the immanent and transcendent aspects of God's existence (vv. 3, 9, 10, 11).
4. Following the desolation of the world comes an era of world peace (vv. 9-12).

Concluding comment on the Zion concept in Psalm xlvii.

There is, in this psalm, an integrated presentation of mythical, historical and cultic features all related closely to the way in which the psalmist pictures Zion. God, Creator, and Victor over the powers of chaos, is also the power who defeats nations. Zion, his dwelling place, stands as a bastion against the chaotic powers of the universe, those rebellious forces, both of the natural world and of the political world, which threaten to overturn Yahweh's system of law and order. It is his creative power which transforms the raging cosmic ocean into a delightful stream which carries blessings to all who dwell in Zion. It is his might as the Lord of hosts which allows Zion to be a place of safety for all who dwell in her.

From Zion, the hill on which the temple stands, God rules the whole land of Israel - but this is symbolic of his rule of the whole world from the gigantic world mountain where he truly dwells. Paradoxically, he performs these

functions simultaneously in his character as the transcendent God who is also immanent in his world.

When Yahweh chooses to act he is capable of demolishing all opposing forces, all war and all war weapons. The actualizing of this possibility will bring about an era of world peace in which God will be manifest as what, in fact, he already is, the ruler of the nations.

Thus, in a comparatively insignificant temple in a very ordinary city, these words of the psalmist (accompanied, perhaps, by equally significant rituals) picture the true dimensions of Zion, which are visible only to the eye of faith, that is to say, to those who truly worship in Zion.

Psalm xlvi

1. A song: a psalm belonging to the sons of Korah.
2. Great is the Lord and highly to be praised,  
in the city of our God, upon his holy hill.
3. Beautiful in height, joy of the whole earth,  
is the hill of Zion, Zaphon's utmost peak,  
the city of the mighty king.
4. Among her citadels God is proclaimed a secure bastion.
5. Yes indeed, the kings mustered;  
they advanced in a body.
6. But when they saw the city they were aghast;  
they panicked and took to flight.
7. Trembling gripped them in that place;  
like the writhing of a woman in labour;
8. as when an east wind shatters the ships of Tarshish.
9. As we have heard, the same we witnessed  
in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God.  
in the city which God holds firm eternally.
10. We have pondered your constant love, O God,  
within your temple.
11. Your name, as your praise,  
resounds to the ends of the earth;  
and your right hand is charged with justice.
12. May the hills of Zion rejoice;  
may the daughters of Judah be glad -  
because of your judgments!

13. March round Zion. Go all around her.  
Count her towers.
14. Examine her ramparts. Pass between her citadels.  
So then, you may declare to the coming generation:
15. "This, indeed, was God, our God for ever and ever;  
he shall always be our guide."

#### Verse 1, Title.

Like Psalm xlvi this is a Korahitic psalm. The implications of this ascription have already been discussed under Psalm xlvi.

#### Verses 2-4

In this section the psalmist praises both God and Zion, the mountain-city where God has chosen to dwell on earth. God's presence ensures that the city will be secure.

V. 2 immediately associates praise of God with his dwelling, the place where worship is most appropriately practised. There is ambiguity in the relation of וְעַל הַר צִיּוֹן to the preceding and following sentences. R.S.V., for example, places the phrase with the following sentence in parallel to Mount Zion. N.E.B., on the other hand, attaches the phrase to the preceding sentence. Metrical balance seems to support R.S.V. but the traditional punctuation supports N.E.B. On the whole the latter seems more convincing. In English it is better to insert "upon" before "his holy hill" to obtain a smoother translation, though this verse and verse 3 both imply that Zion refers both to the city and to the hill.



V. 3 describes the mountain-city more fully, comparing it with the proverbial, holy mountain of mythology and describing Yahweh as its King.

The key words in this description are זָרְחָהּ זָרְחָהּ is the dual construct of זָרַח or זָרַח. The singular means "flank" or "side" but the dual form usually means "extreme parts" or "recesses".<sup>1</sup> זָרַח usually means "north" and has a connotation of mystery because of its connection with the root זָרַח (hide, treasure up). However, the Ugaritic spn, the name for the mountain where Baal lived, may support a transliteration of the text as a proper name, "Zaphon".<sup>2</sup>

Some scholars have tried to connect this description with the geographical Jerusalem. Delitzsch, though not supporting this interpretation, gives a clear exposition of it.<sup>3</sup> The dual of זָרַח often means "thighs" and hence, figuratively, "angle". The phrase could then refer to the north east corner of ancient Jerusalem. The reading of R.P., "Zion on the north side", seems to support this. Very much against the argument, however, is that the site of pre-Christian Zion is thought to have been on the eastern hill above Gihon, or less probably on the south west hill.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, such an interpretation is not very convincing.

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1. See B.D.B., p. 438; K.B., p. 405.

2. See Driver, C.M.L., p. 150; cf. B.D.B., p. 860; K.B., p. 812.

3. Delitzsch, The Psalms II, pp. 118ff.

4. Adam Smith, Jerusalem I, pp. 160-1.

It is incidental to the main argument, yet interesting, that there is a theory that the four cardinal points of the compass are mentioned, each in a different section of the psalm. This, claims Palmer, is a poetic conceit to express the universality of God's rule.<sup>1</sup> However, the fact that some of the references, if they exist, are indirect puns makes the theory less credible.

LXX translates  $\text{ןִיֹּסִי הַצִּדְדֵי־נֹכְחִי}$  as  $\tauὰ \piλευρὰ τοῦ βορρᾶ$  (on the sides of the north) which is followed by A.V. What this means is not at all clear. R.S.V.'s "Mount Zion in the far north", and N.E.B.'s "Zion's hill, like the farthest reaches of the north", are typical modern translations. Those who adhere to this kind of translation explain the reference to the north as an indirect connection with either an unidentified, mythical, holy mountain in the general area of Armenia or with Mount Zaphon in the Ugaritic texts. Delitzsch explains it as a dual reference to the "mystery" of the north and to the north as the seat of the gods in Asiatic mythology.<sup>2</sup> Although this scholar did not have access to the Ugaritic texts he puts forward a convincing case for this interpretation which, if combined with new knowledge about Mount Zaphon, still has value.

Typical of those who connect the  $\text{ןִיֹּסִי}$  of this verse directly with the Ugaritic Mount Zaphon is Johnson, who translates, "the heights of Zaphon".<sup>3</sup> The Ugaritic

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1. Palmer, Biblica, XLVI 1965, pp. 357-8.

2. Loc. cit.

3. Johnson, S.K., p. 86.

Zaphon has been supposedly identified with Mount Casios (or Jebel-el-Aqra) some twenty five miles north of the city of Ugarit,<sup>1</sup> and according to the text it was the dwelling place of Baal.<sup>2</sup> Kraus opines that the idea of Zaphon as the seat of the gods was transferred to Zion via the Jebusite cultus of El 'Elyon, and Clements agrees with this statement.<sup>3</sup> This is possible, but it is more likely that holy mountains were customarily called Zaphon and that Zion and the holy place of Ugarit were just two examples of this tendency. Morgenstern, for example, argues that there was an original mythological mountain described in Akkadian literature as the north west pillar of the earth.<sup>4</sup> He connects this with the seven stages of the Babylonian temple tower and traces the same concepts in 1 Enoch xviii 6-14, xxiv 2-xxv 5, where a complex of mountains arranged in a right angle is described. Further he connects the mythical story of Is. xiv 12-15 with a north Semitic myth in which Helel ben Shahaar ascends to the summit of Zaphon to seize El's throne. This mountain is also the place of the assembly of the gods and is to be equated with the garden mountain of Ezek. xxviii. While Morgenstern's dating of the emergence of this strand in Israelite thought is to be questioned, and while all the details of his argument need not be accepted, he has established a good case for a mythical

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1. Clements, God and Temple, p. 5.

2. Driver, op.cit., Baal V iva lff. and passim.

3. Kraus, Psalmen I, pp. 342-5; Clements, Worship in Israel pp. 20lff.

4. Morgenstern, H.U.C.A., XVI 1941, pp. 1-95.

mountain of the gods called Zaphon, on which Ugaritic and Israelite mountain myths both depended for the title "Zaphon".

Wanke also argues for a late date for the appearance of this myth in Israelite literature, arguing that eschatological passages like Is. ii 2-4 (=Mic. iv 1-4), Zech. xiv 10 and Ezek. xvii 22ff. contained the first references to it. He therefore assumes that Psalm ~~xlvi~~ <sup>xlviii</sup> is post-Exilic in its present form.<sup>1</sup> However, it is difficult to believe that the myth was current in Ugarit in 1400 B.C. and that it did not appear in Israel until such a late period. Moreover, the theme appears in Is. xiv which Wanke admits is an early passage because El appears as the head of the council of gods.<sup>2</sup>

The same ambiguity of meaning as exists in Psalm ~~xlvi~~ <sup>xlviii</sup> 3 seems to apply in the Ugaritic texts. The words bšrtrt.špn,<sup>3</sup> given by Driver as, "in the recesses of the north", could just as readily be given as "on the heights of Zaphon". Further, the impression of great distance is given in the line, myrm.špn.bālp(.)šd.rbt.kmn, translated by Driver as, "(in) the heights of the north across a thousand furlongs, ten thousand leagues".<sup>4</sup> Again, this could just as readily refer to "the heights of Zaphon". While it is true that the measurements given are not certain, this line tends to

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1. Wanke, D.Z.D.K., pp. 64-66.

2. Op.cit., p. 47.

3. Driver, op.cit., Baal I i 15-17, III i 28-32 and passim.

4. Ibid., Baal V iva 38.

support the theory of a mythical mountain in the very far north, that is to say, not necessarily the mountain near Ugarit.

Accepting that זַפְּוֹן is a proper noun here, on the basis of the preceding arguments, what is the best translation of זַפְּוֹן וְזַפְּוֹן ? Further, what is the relationship of זַפְּוֹן-וְזַפְּוֹן to Zaphon qualified by זַפְּוֹן ? There is obviously some kind of comparison between the two mountains and possibly identification. The latter is more probable because the two phrases are in apposition. On the other hand, the two could be understood to be linked by a preposition, for example "upon". On balance it would seem fair to assume that in a metaphorical sense the two mountains are one and the same. Similarly, it may be that the temple area in Ugarit, like Mount Zion, was referred to as Zaphon. Certainly, the temples of Dagan and Baal were prominently situated in the city. Moreover, there is evidence of a parallelism of Ugarit and Zaphon similar to the parallelism of Zion and Zaphon here. In Text 107 of the Ugaritic texts, a probable reading is, b'd.špn.b'd.ugrt, though the adjoining words are not clear.<sup>1</sup> A further example is quoted by Albright from an administrative list from Ugarit, reading, āl Hal-bi HUR.SAG Ha-zi(sī) = Hlb Špn, and translating, "The town of Halbu (of) Mount Hazi = Halbu of Safon". He argues that Hazi is Mount Casios.<sup>2</sup> This is dubious. If, however, it is accepted that Zaphon was applied as a title to many

1. Gordon, Ugaritic Manual, Text 107.

2. Albright, Festschrift für A. Bertholet, pp. 1-14.

towns and sacred mountains, all becomes clear. The same can be said of other examples which are quoted by this scholar and these, added to those above, make up a formidable array of evidence.

In the cases of both Zion and Ugarit this paradox is best understood as a means of expressing the mystery of God's presence, Zaphon being the transcendental counterpart, the true heavenly mountain and dwelling place of God. The mythical mountain, though in origin visualized at a great distance, was regarded as transferable, in a mystical sense to the area of worship. Even though Baal had to travel a great distance to Mount Zaphon he was also present in Ugarit. Baal's palace was constructed šrṛt špn (on the heights of Zaphon?).<sup>1</sup> Yet the description of this palace, built of Lebanon cedars and furnished with silver and gold, obviously refers to the temple at Ugarit and echoes the building of Solomon's temple.<sup>2</sup> In this case, the רֶכֶס צִיּוֹן of Zaphon is (are) best envisaged in vertical rather than horizontal terms, for the link between heaven and earth is usually pictured in this way. (See below.) The meaning "recesses" does not accord very well with this idea, even if Zion is seen as nestling in the valleys of the gigantic world mountain. Therefore, the best meaning implies "height" or "at the extremes of height", Zion being visualized as on the peak of Zaphon. A suitable translation would be,..."the hill of Zion, Zaphon's utmost peak, the city of the great

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1. Driver, C.M.L., Baal II v 54-55.

2. Ibid., Baal, II vi 1-40.

king". אֵל עֲנִי is accepted as singular in meaning because as an "angle" it could refer to the peak of the mountain, and this peak, in any case, is "at the extremes of Zaphon", that is to say, at the top.

Other dimensions of the holy mountain concept are implicit in the statement of this verse. Clements shows that both El and Baal lived on symbolic world mountains, which is to say that as the mountain was dedicated to the god, the whole land, earth and cosmos belonged to the god.<sup>1,2</sup> This is probably the case here. Burrows convincingly argues that the mountain was regarded as the centre of the world. As the earth was regarded as a dome, the centre would therefore be the highest point and navel of the earth (cf. Ezek. xxxviii 12). This idea was common in the Ancient Near East, as for example in the theology of the Babylonian Ziqqurat which, in a flat landscape, replaced the holy mountain as the link between heaven and earth.<sup>3</sup> Hammerton-Kelly shows that Zion was regarded as a copy of God's dwelling place in heaven. This general idea is supported by the P writer in Ex. xxv 40 where Moses was commanded to build the sanctuary on earth according to God's command (cf. Ezek. xliii 10ff.). This idea has Akkadian and Sumerian parallels so it can be accepted as not unusual in the Ancient Near East.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the temple and God's

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1. Cf. El špn, ibid., Baal V iva 19.

2. Clements, God and Temple, pp. 4-12.

3. Burrows, The Labyrinth, (ed. Hooke), pp. 45-70.

4. Hammerton-Kelly, V.T., XX 1970, pp. 1-15.



throne in heaven are given as parallels in Psalm xi 4. It can be seen, then, that the holy mountain was regarded as a universal and cosmic centre from which God ruled (cf. Ezek. xxviii 14, 16; Psalms lxviii 15, lxxxix 12; Job xxvi 7, xxxvii 22-3).

One question that arises is how Zion came to be regarded as God's dwelling place. Although it was probably a Jebusite cultic site, it is more probable that the moving of the ark to Jerusalem was the decisive factor. There is evidence of a conscious justification of this move from the centre of the confederation at Shiloh to the new site at Zion in Psalm lxxvii 60-68. It is probable also that the Sinai tradition was in some sense incorporated into the Zion tradition, even if it was simply a taking over of the vocabulary of theophany, (cf. Psalm L 1-6), and the association of the covenant and the law with Mount Zion. In other words, the concept of Zion as God's dwelling was the result of several strands of myth and historical tradition coming together.

"Zion" first appears in 2 Sam. v 7 as a Jebusite stronghold. It is explained as being the "city of David". K.B. suggests that the most likely development of the name is from a root  $\text{ז.נ.ה}$  (protect); and that the word  $\text{ז.נ.ה}$  (shield) is connected with the same root.<sup>1</sup> However, the etymological development is probably more likely to be deduced from the Arabic sahweh, meaning "hillcrest" or

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1. See K.B., pp. 802, 806.



"citadel".<sup>1</sup> The Arabic name for Zion is Ṣahyūn. The word צִיּוֹן in Hebrew, meaning "landmark", may be connected with the same root.<sup>2</sup> A connection with the Hurrian ṣeya (river) is less likely and the Hebrew יָבֵשׁ (dry place) appears to be from a different root. In the time of Solomon Zion was still, apparently, considered to be separate from the temple (cf. 1 Kings viii 1). At some (later?) time Yahweh was said to dwell on Mount Zion, as in this psalm and in Psalms lxxiv 2, lxxxiv 7 etc. Is it possible that the moving of the ark to the temple brought about this change? At another (later?) stage Zion was equated with the whole city so that it often became difficult to distinguish Zion from Jerusalem. It is, of course, possible that the name Zion was used with these different references from the time of David. It is not often in the psalms that Zion refers to the community, although this appears to be the reference in Psalms cxlvi 10 and cxlvii 12. This is much more common in later writings such as Deutero-Isaiah.

At any rate, in this verse, Zion is in apposition with "the city of the great king". גָּדוֹל is acceptable as an adjective meaning "great", though some scholars prefer to parse it as the third person singular of the qal perfect of גָּדַל, meaning "strive" or "plead a cause".<sup>3</sup>

1. Adam Smith, op.cit., pp. 134-169; Buttrick (ed.), The Interpreter's Dictionary IV.

2. See, however, B.D.B. p. 844, where it is given under צִיּוֹן.

3. See Barnes, The Psalms II, p. 236.

The former interpretation is supported by the Assyrian sarru rabbu, which is a title meaning, "Great King".<sup>1</sup> There is no doubt that in this verse the title refers to God (cf. לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ in Psalm xcv 3).

It is possible that the author of Lamentations had this verse in mind when he wrote, "Is this the city which was called the perfection of beauty, the joy of all the earth?" Such a description is scarcely exaggerated when the universal and cosmic associations of Zion are considered!

V. 4 gives a summary of the "inviolability of Zion" concept. This has been discussed in relation to Psalm xlvi 6. (See also Appendix 2 for the relation of Isaiah's oracles in Chaps. i-xxxix to these psalms.)

בְּאַרְמֹנֶיהָ could be translated "in her citadels" or "in her palaces". The former is preferable because of the parallelism with the second part of the verse.

### Verses 5-9

This section describes an alliance of kings who attack the city of God. They are terrified and put to flight by their first sight of the city. This is analagous to the defeat of the nations and kingdoms mentioned briefly in Psalm xlvi 7. It is necessary to decide the source of this tradition and the purpose of the description in these psalms. While this theme is part of the "inviolability of

1. See Gunkel, Die Psalmen, pp. 204-8; Kirkpatrick, The Psalms, pp. 262-4.

Zion" theme, it is, in a sense, to be distinguished from it. There is a difference between the general statement, "God is in her midst; she shall never fall...", (Psalm xlvii 6), and the claim that a group of kings or nations have been or will be defeated by Yahweh before Zion. Yet, at the same time, it is possible that both themes have their origin from similar circumstances.

There is also a qualitative difference between the two related passages in Psalms xlvii and xlviii. The former is rather vague and imprecise while the latter reads more like a description of a specific event. Even so, these are the only two places where this theme appears in the psalms, though it is common enough in prophetic eschatology. Perhaps more importantly, some of Isaiah's oracles, probably based on similar traditions to the two psalm passages, describe the attacking nations in great detail (cf. Is. x 24-34). In others, the nations and the chaos waters are intermingled as in Psalm xlvii (cf. Is. xviii 12-14).

Existing views on the two psalm passages are as follows. First of all, some scholars attempt to interpret the passages historically. Kirkpatrick, for example, assigns both psalms, "with a probability which approaches certainty", to the period of Hezekiah's survival against Sennacherib.<sup>1</sup> With equal firmness, Delitzsch proposes the reign of Jehoshaphat when the Moabites, Ammonites and Edomites threatened Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> It could also be argued that the period of Ahaz during the Syro-Ephraimite coalition

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1. Kirkpatrick, The Psalms, pp. 253-5, 262-4.

2. Delitzsch, The Psalms II, pp. 107ff and 118ff.

was suitable (cf. 2 Kings xvi 5-6). These various possibilities show that specific information is lacking, so that it is difficult to be accurate in any historical interpretation. Nevertheless, the force of the description in Psalm xlviii added to the comment in v. 9, imply a historical memory of some kind, probably an accumulative one. Further it is to be noted that Psalm lxxvi is written in a similar vein, though a defeat of nations or kings is not mentioned.

A second view is taken by most modern commentators. Johnson, for example, suggests that both psalms formed a libretto to a cultic battle shown in a ritual drama depicting a fight between the king, as representative of Yahweh, and the kings of the earth.<sup>1</sup> He maintains that the battle took place within the city and that it was followed by a procession round the walls. It is also part of Johnson's theory that the Davidic king was a "suffering servant" in a ritual humiliation which took place before the victorious battle. All of this was part of the autumn festival which celebrated the kingship of Yahweh and his original triumph over the cosmic sea, his enthronement in the assembly of gods and the recreation of the ordered world. The intermingling of historical and cosmic themes in Psalm xlvi tends to support this interpretation. However, there is no firm evidence in the Old Testament for a ritual battle and although the royal psalms and psalms of lamentation do not contradict this theory, there are no rubrics to suggest their use in

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1. Johnson, S.K., pp. 86ff., 113ff., 134ff.; cf. also Bentzen, King and Messiah, pp. 13ff., 24ff., 42f.; Ringgren, Israelite Religion, pp. 225ff.

the cult. On the other hand, the parallels found in Babylonian and Canaanite literature, extensively quoted by adherents of this school of thought, can be used to make out a plausible case. It can probably be concluded that at some periods of Israel's history such syncretistic ritual activities may have taken place.<sup>1</sup> Weiser also accepts a cultic interpretation. He argues that Psalm xlvi 9 shows that some kind of cultic act was seen and heard, but he relates the theme rather to the historical tradition of the saving acts of God.<sup>2</sup> This combination of a cultic interpretation with an emphasis on the influence of historical events is quite convincing.

A third interpretation considers that the psalms are eschatological in intent. Gunkel, following Rabbinic interpretation, interprets the defeat of the nations as future.<sup>3</sup> His main argument is that the theme is common in prophetic eschatology as in Jer. i 15, Joel iv 9ff., Mic. iv 11, Zeph. iii 8, Zech. xii 2, xiv 2. Wanke also takes this view, believing that the two psalms were written in post-Exilic times.<sup>4</sup> It is unarguable that the theme of the defeat of the nations is typically eschatological. Indeed, in Psalm xlvi, where the end of all wars and a reign of universal peace follow the battle, the eschatological element is undoubtedly present; but it has already been shown that

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1. For similar interpretations of these psalms, see Mowinckel, P.I.W. I, pp. 19ff., 110ff.; H.T.C., pp. 25-6, 49ff., 71ff., 83ff.; Eaton, Psalms, pp. 131-2.

2. Weiser, The Psalms, pp. 380-1.

3. Gunkel, Die Psalmen, pp. 204-8.

4. Wanke, D.Z.D.K., pp. 68ff.

this description represents the stage of proto-eschatology. However, the same cannot be said for Psalm xlviii, in which the perfect tenses of vv. 5-7 and the comment of v. 9 both deny a future reference. Yet, it is true that the description is more than a factual, historical account; but any additional element can be explained as the result of the poet's intensified inner experience of an external event. How, then, are the two passages related? To answer this question it is necessary to examine the process by which this theme developed in eschatology.

Wanke takes the view that the original source of the theme of the defeat of the nations lies in a legendary tradition about the Sea Peoples similar to the Egyptian legend.<sup>1</sup> This was taken over by Jeremiah in his description of the "foe from the north", and later Ezekiel adapted the idea in his Gog prophecy. At the same time a legendary account of Sennacherib's failure to capture Jerusalem was growing. These two strands were united in post-Exilic eschatology in the theme of the defeat of the nations before Jerusalem. Further, there was interaction between prophetic eschatology and Psalms xlvi and xlviii. It is obvious that Wanke has to rely upon a historical Jerusalem tradition from the pre-Exilic period in order to explain the theme. In fact, a succession of experiences in which Jerusalem remained inviolate from enemy capture (are) is sufficient to explain the appearance of the theme in the psalms. At the same time, it is probable that there was a prophetic proto-eschatology current in the pre-Exilic period

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1. Loc. cit.

which would explain the eschatological element in Psalm xlvi. It is only necessary to examine the two passages from Isaiah quoted above to see that this is so (cf. Isaiah x 24-34, xvii 12-14). It is not sufficient to categorize such passages as late insertions. (See Appendix 3 for a full discussion of Wanke's position.)

It is a mistake to emphasize one of these three types of interpretation to the exclusion of the other two. It has been shown that historical events in Jerusalem are probably the main source for the development of this theme. To a great extent this factor ties the theme closely to the more general theme of the inviolability of Zion so that the two, in fact, are facets of the same belief in Yahweh's victorious presence on Zion. Yet, it is to be noted that in Psalm xlvi 7 the theme is generalized, together with the cosmic theme of the victory over chaos, in a way which justifies the label "proto-eschatological". It is quite possible that both psalms, when they were written, were influenced by the same trends of thought that moved Isaiah of Jerusalem, in whose writings similar themes appear with similar emphases. (See Appendix 2.)

At the same time, the psalms surely had a cultic setting, which places them in a different category from prophetic oracles. In other words, it is essential to attempt to interpret the psalms from the cultic point of view. The theme of the defeat of the nations stands alongside other Zion themes which, as a matter of probability, would be presented at the autumn festival. Leaving aside the question of accompanying rituals, which can only be



surmised, it can be assumed with Kraus that in a great act of praise and thanksgiving before Yahweh, the theme was one of a number of motives for worship.<sup>1</sup> In respect of the theme of the defeat of the nations, therefore, there is expressed an ideology in literary/liturgical form used in the worship of the Jerusalem temple to glorify the universal power of the "great King" by the community.

וַיִּזְרָח in v. 6 from יִזְרַח, meaning in the niph'al, "to hurry away with alarm", is given by some manuscripts as וַיִּזְרַח, from יִזְרַח which means, "to be ruthless, boastful or haughty". However, the parallel word וַיִּזְרַח shows that the former word is correct.

V. 8 at first sight seems rather incongruous in relation to Jerusalem. It is possible, if an earlier poem about Zaphon was imitated by the psalmist here, that the description was preserved accidentally. This, however, seems unlikely. Morgenstern tries to argue that this verse describes the destruction of the Persian fleet of Xerxes in 480 B.C.<sup>2</sup> Such an explanation seems highly improbable. It is much more likely that the description is metaphorical for Yahweh's power in all spheres. It is feasible that the metaphor would be a current one in Jerusalem, for Israel did have a merchant navy (cf. I Kings x 2, xxii 48). These ships sailed from Ezion-geber on the Gulf of Aqaba. The original name for the ships may be Phoenician, for that ocean going people had copper refineries at Tartessus in Spain.<sup>3</sup>

1. Kraus, Psalmen I, pp. 355-61.

2. Morgenstern, H.U.C.A., XVI 1941, pp. 1-95.

3. See Peake's Commentary, 424h, p. 492.



With some mss. וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ is emended to וַיִּרְאוּ  
(cf. N.E.B.).

V. 9 can be interpreted in at least three different ways. The words וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ and וַיִּרְאוּ could imply that the congregation had heard and seen a ritual performance of the battle.<sup>1</sup> However, as demonstrated above, there is no internal Biblical evidence to support this interpretation. Secondly, the words could refer to the experiences of the congregation in real life and to the traditions they had received from their forbears.<sup>2</sup> This is more likely, though the wording seems to imply a more immediate antecedent experience. Thirdly, the statement could refer to cultic, prophetic utterances heard and seen by the people.<sup>3</sup> This is possible, for some psalms appear to contain such prophetic utterances (cf. Psalm lxxxi 5ff.). However, there seems to be no previous utterance here, unless Psalm xlvi 9-10 could be classified in this way, assuming that the two psalms were part of a series. On the whole, it is probable that the second explanation, referring to past deliverances, combined with the recapitulation of these in vv. 5-8, supply the occasion for these words without necessary recourse to a hypothetical dramatic performance.

It is interesting to note that the title וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ וַיִּרְאוּ is used here in a similar setting to Psalm xlvi. This is probably an allusion to the ark tradition of God as a warrior at the head of Israel's army.

1. See, for example, Eaton, Psalms, p. 133.

2. Kirkpatrick, The Psalms, pp. 265-6.

3. Oesterley, The Psalms I, pp. 262-4.

The use of the verb  $\text{קָנַח}$  (make firm) for the upholding of the city may indicate another mythological strand in the psalm.<sup>1</sup> The word is used of founding a building on pillars in Judges xvi 26, 29 (cf. Hab. ii 12, Is. ii 2). It is also used of founding the earth on pillars (cf. Psalms lxxviii 68ff., civ 5-7). It is possible that Zion as the holy mountain was envisaged as one of the pillars of the earth, which was founded by God to withstand the power of the chaos waters.

### Verses 10-12

After the description of the battle, now follows the thanksgiving, stated specifically to be in the temple.

V. 10 states that the congregation has thought of God's love during the temple service and implies that this is the ground of praise. N.E.B. takes the word  $\text{חָשַׁבְתִּי}$  to mean "re-enacted", probably assuming that a cultic drama had taken place. R.S.V. accepts the meaning "thought on". The ambiguity arises from the difficulty of deciding whether the pi'el of  $\text{חָשַׁב}$  here applies to a mental operation as in 2 Sam. xxi 15 or to an external comparison as in Hos. xii 11. Only the context can decide which is correct and the evidence seems to support R.S.V.

It is common in the psalms, as here, to give the motive of God's saving acts as his steadfast or constant love ( $\text{חַסֵּד}$ ) for his people. This word is usually associated with the covenant, especially in Hosea. It is used over a

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1. Wolverton, Anglican Theol. Review, XLVII 1965, pp. 16-32.

hundred times in the psalms to describe God's love for man.<sup>1</sup>

V. 11 shows that God's actions in Zion affect the whole world and that his saving acts are given world-wide praise. This may be hyperbolic but it is likely to have been inspired by the thought that God, in fact, does rule the whole world (cf. Psalm xlvii 8). The psalmist probably envisaged a time when his words would describe this as a reality.

לָּ is changed to לָּ by some manuscripts and this may have been followed by the Syriac, Jerome and the Arabic. This is obviously the sense, but in any case לָּ can mean "towards".<sup>2</sup>

פָּ is given by R.S.V. as "victory" and by N.E.B. as "justice". The basic root of this word probably meant "straight" or "in proper order".<sup>3</sup> It has different shades of meaning, including the English "righteousness", but it is more often an active quality rather than an abstraction. It could well be translated "vindication", especially of those who cannot secure their rights (cf. Psalm lxxii, Hannah's Prayer in 1 Sam. ii and the Magnificat). In Deutero-Isaiah the word almost comes to mean "salvation". The best translation here is "justice" understood as "vindicating righteous".

In v. 12 Mount Zion is personified as one who is glad. This is probably a figure of speech rather than a deliberate

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1. For full details see Kirkpatrick, op.cit., pp. 95ff. and Appendix I; Snaith, D.I.O.T. under לָּ.
  2. See G.K., 119e.
  3. See Snaith, op.cit., under פָּ.

reference to the community. Natural features are often poetically described as "being glad" in Hebrew poetry.

The "daughters of Judah" probably refers to provincial towns. N.E.B. makes this explicit (cf. Num. xxi 25, Psalms lxix 25, 36, xcvi 8, Joshua xvii 11, 16).

נִשְׁבְּחוּ (your judgments) is as concrete a word as נִשְׁבַּח and is often associated with God's actions. "The people of the area around Jerusalem give praise because of God's just actions", is the sense here.

### Verses 13-15

Eaton<sup>1</sup> and Johnson<sup>2</sup> both consider that these verses are a summons to the people to process round the city walls, the purpose of the procession being to consecrate the territory outside the temple and to carry the blessing. Gunkel maintains that festal processions of this kind were customary in many ancient religions.<sup>3</sup> Kraus also quotes parallels in other religions but claims that the uniqueness here is that Zion's inviolability is being praised.<sup>4</sup> The latter named scholar further claims that the procession may have originated from a magical procedure similar to the walking round the walls of Jericho in Josh. vi. However, he admits that a new interpretation would be given to the custom in later Israel. Such a development is possible but somewhat hypothetical. Certainly, processions round the walls were not unknown, as is shown by the account of

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1. Eaton, Psalms, p. 133.

2. Johnson, S.K., p. 89.

3. Gunkel, Die Psalmen, pp. 204-8.

4. Kraus, Psalmen I, pp. 355-61.

the re-dedication in Neh. xii 27ff. An alternative would be to consider the passage as simply a rhetorical appeal to inspect the still intact defences of the city, thus emphasizing Yahweh's guardianship over it. However, there is no reason why there should not have been a procession as part of the celebrations of the autumn festival, and these verses, taken in conjunction with other psalms, provide a good case for at least two kinds of processions. It is quite likely, as shown by Psalms xxiv, lxviii 24-5, and cxviii 17, that there was also an ark procession. The main purpose of the procession here would be to inspect the strong defences of Yahweh's city and to ask for his blessing upon them.

The people are then exhorted to tell the next generation about God as the guide and protector of his chosen people.

In v. 14 𐤏𐤓𐤕𐤓𐤕 should have mappiq, as some manuscripts and the versions suggest.

𐤏𐤓𐤕𐤓𐤕 literally means "split in two" and hence "pass between". Late Hebrew supports such a meaning.<sup>1</sup> However, this has caused difficulty and B.H.S. recommends the reading 𐤏𐤓𐤕𐤓𐤕 (inspect) as a better parallel. The Aramaic ܕܢܝܢ (tread) has also been suggested. LXX gives *καταδιδέλεσθε* (observe) which may be the basis of R.S.V.'s "consider". Dahood<sup>2</sup> divides the word as pa (and) sigu (meditate) on the basis of the Ugaritic, but there is no evidence in the Old Testament for this construction; nor for the verb 𐤏𐤓𐤕𐤓𐤕 having this meaning. It seems best

1. B.B.D. p. 819 (K.B. p. 768 gives as unexplained.)

2. Dahood, The Psalms I, p. 293.

to accept the meaning "pass between". R.V.'s "traverse" is quite close to this. Both N.E.B. and R.S.V. accept this shade of meaning.

V. 15 is either a statement that God is the guide of his people for all time or it could contain a reference to victory over death. The crux of the interpretation is  $\text{מָוֶת}-\text{לְ}^1$ . As pointed,  $\text{מָוֶת}$  could be the gal infinitive construct of  $\text{מָוֶת}$  (to die), but this does not make sense. If the word means "death" it would need to be repointed  $\text{מָוֶת}$ . Jerome appears to have assumed this with his in mortem; likewise the Syriac. This translation is followed by Eaton who believes that God is described as leading his people to victory over Death, personified as "a comprehensive manifestation of evil, the principal challenger to God's kingship".<sup>2</sup> Johnson agrees with this, characterizing Death as God's arch enemy;<sup>3</sup> and so does Mowinckel.<sup>4</sup> Such a translation assumes that Death was equivalent to Mot who, in the Ugaritic texts, was defeated by Baal. That the general theme of Yahweh's conflict with the powers of chaos appears in the psalms cannot be denied; that the psalmists were influenced by similar texts to the Ras Shamra texts is demonstrable; there is, therefore, quite a strong case for this interpretation. On the other hand, LXX translates  $\epsilon\lambda\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\ \alpha\iota\omega\upsilon\alpha\varsigma$ , presupposing  $\text{מָוֶתִם}$ , an unusual form of plural. N.E.B. and R.S.V. both accept this meaning,

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1. K.B. p.709 gives as an unexplained technical note.

2. Loc. cit.

3. Loc. cit.

4. Mowinckel, P.I.W. I, p. 152.

which the parallelism supports. A third possibility is to follow the recommendation of B.H.S. and read  $\text{מָוֶלֶת} - \text{לָּא} \text{ } \underline{\text{לָּא}}$ . Kraus accepts this interpretation.<sup>1</sup> It is usually assumed, in this case, that the phrase belongs to the title of Psalm xlix. This would then resemble the title of Psalm xlvi. Somewhat similar to this is Delitzsch's suggestion that  $\text{מָוֶלֶת} \text{ } \underline{\text{לָּא}}$  in the title of Psalm ix means "After Muth", being the name of a note or melody, and that the word in Psalm xlviii means the same.<sup>2</sup> The only way to decide which interpretation is correct is to judge which meaning best fits the context. To assume the word is a title for Psalm xlix means leaving a gap in the text of Psalm xlviii and a rather weak ending. To accept the translation "Death" is tempting, but in the present context it is not the most meaningful answer. Therefore, the translation "eternally" or "always" is accepted as the most appropriate for the sake of parallelism, euphony and metre.

### General Comments

This psalm, like Psalm xlvi, is a Zion hymn.<sup>3</sup> Its themes are related to God's kingship in Zion and to God's protection of his city and holy mountain.

The metre of the psalm is not regular. The Qinah (3:2) metre is used in vv. 4-8 and elsewhere. Verses 2-3 are mainly 2:2:2 with a 3:3 at the end of v. 3. V. 11 is

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1. Loc. cit.

2. Delitzsch, The Psalms II, p. 124.

3. See Kraus, Psalmen I, pp. 355-61.





probably 2:2:2:3. V. 15 is probably 3:3:3. Thus, it can be seen that it is difficult to assign a particular metre to the psalm. It is to be noted, however, that mixed metres were not uncommon in Hebrew poetry and in the verse of contemporary languages.<sup>1</sup>

There are five groups of ideas in the psalm.

- (a) In vv. 2-4 the God who resides in Zion, the mountain-city, is praised. God is proclaimed as the King and protector of the city.
- (b) In vv. 5-9 an alliance of kings is described as approaching the city. However, when they see it they turn back in fear.
- (c) In vv. 10-12 a hymn of thanksgiving for deliverance is presented.
- (d) In vv. 13-14a the congregation is invited to go round the walls of the city in procession.
- (e) In vv. 14b-15 it is hoped that the tradition of God as protector and guide will be handed on to future generations.

The psalm has been interpreted by different scholars in at least three ways. Using vv. 5-9 as a basis, the older commentators often asserted that the psalm was inspired by a specific event in Jerusalem's history, but as has already been explained, the description gives no exact clue as to the historical background. However, as the discussion showed, it is fair to assume that historical events over a period gave rise to this description, and probably inspired

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1. Kapelrud, R.S.D.O.T., pp. 71ff.





the psalm as a whole. This is not to deny that there are mythical strands in the psalm, especially in the imagery used to describe God's dwelling place.

Gunkel<sup>1</sup> and Oesterley<sup>2</sup> argue that the psalm is eschatological. When the arguments for this viewpoint are analysed, only two arguments are at all convincing. The first maintains that the picture of the divine King ruling on a holy mountain is a typical eschatological description. This, however, ignores the mythical origin of the picture, a sufficient explanation of its appearance without having recourse to later eschatology. The second argument maintains that the theme of the attacking kings is the same as the eschatological theme of the final war and the defeat of the nations. Against this, it can be strongly argued that the description here is based on a series of historical events, though it is true that poetic imagination has lifted the battle beyond the prosaic reality. There are no convincing grounds for labelling the psalm as eschatological.

A third group of scholars interprets the psalm from the cultic point of view. It cannot be denied that this is a valid, perhaps even essential, way of interpreting the psalm. It has been shown in the discussion that some scholars take an extreme cultic view. Johnson, for example, believes that the battle in vv. 5-9 was a cultic representation in dramatic form.<sup>3</sup> This could certainly have been possible at some periods when syncretistic tendencies were strong, but there is no internal evidence to show that this was normative

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1. Gunkel, Die Psalmen, pp. 204-8.

2. Oesterley, The Psalms I, pp. 260-4.

3. Johnson, S.K., pp. 86ff., 113ff., 134ff.

cultic practice. Kraus's view is less extreme but more convincing, though he places too much emphasis on pre-Israelite tradition.<sup>1</sup> In essence he believes that the psalm, like Psalm xlvi, was part of a great act of praise before Yahweh (i.e. a Proskynese). This seems to be a very sensible view. On the whole, then, it is probable that the psalm has a historical basis; at the same time its cultic importance is evident.

As to the exact Sitz im Leben, the content of the psalm is not very helpful. It can be surmised that the Feast of Tabernacles, the most important festival of the year, would be the most likely time for the psalm to be used. Psalm xlvi shows more clearly that it was probably used at that feast, and Psalm xlviii is surely a companion psalm. It is quite possible that a sequence of Zion psalms was used as part of the festival celebrations.

#### Aspects of the Zion concept presented in the psalm.

1. Zion is equated with Zaphon, the mysterious mountain of the north (v. 3). Zion-Jerusalem is also described as the city of the mighty king.
2. Zion-Jerusalem is safe because God himself is like a bastion among her citadels (v. 4).
3. An alliance of kings is defeated before Zion, the sight of which was sufficient to rout them in panic (vv. 5-9).
4. God's just rule from Zion is praised (vv. 10-12).

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1. Kraus, Psalmen, pp. 355-61; cf. Roberts, J.B.L., XCII 1973, pp. 329-44, who argues against the influence of the Jebusite cultus on the Zion concept.

5. God is praised for the deliverance of Zion (vv. 10-12).
6. A procession round the walls of Zion is summoned. The purpose of this is to examine the strength of God's city (vv. 13-14).

Associated theme indirectly related to the Zion concept.

1. The tradition of God as protector and guide is to be handed on to the coming generations.

Concluding comment on the Zion concept in Psalm xlviii.

Zion is not only equated with the mythical, holy mountain of the far north, Zaphon, but it is clear that Zion is also defined as a city, which can only be Jerusalem. Zion, the holy mountain on the peak of Mount Zaphon, is thus equated with God's city, Jerusalem, where he reigns as King. As in Psalm xlvi, this description underlines the transcendent and immanent character of God as the ruler of the cosmos, his transcendence being expressed by the "Zaphon element" in the parallelism, and his immanence by the "Zion element".

God himself is the secure bastion of this impregnable city. The appearance of the city, together with its reputation as God's dwelling place, are sufficient to cause attackers to panic at the sight of it. Even a great alliance of kings shuddered when first seeing the city they had proposed to attack, and God's power overwhelmed them and they fled. This belief in the city's impregnability is not just a theory. The inhabitants have actually witnessed events such as those described and now they gather to give

thanks for the divine protection of their city over the past year and to pray for the continuance of the same throughout the coming year.

The psalmist praises the city and through this praise really gives glory to God who upholds it. The statement that God's universal sovereignty is widely known, though not strictly true, is an expression of the worshippers' conviction that God truly is the One who rules the world from Zion, the world's centre. The belief in God's protecting power is symbolized by the appeal to examine the powerful battlements of the earthly city, Jerusalem. This is a wonder of faith which ought to be handed on to future generations. In this way, the religious and historical traditions of the city are preserved in the regular praise and worship which are carried on in Zion's temple.

Psalm lxxvi

1. To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A  
psalm of Asaph. A song.
  2. In Judah God is proclaimed:  
his name is celebrated in Israel.
  3. His covert lies in Salem;  
in Zion is his retreat.
  4. There, the lightning arrows of the bow,  
the shield, the sword - all weapons are broken.
  5. Terrible, majestic,  
you tear apart like a rushing torrent;
  6. powerful men are plundered,  
they sleep their sleep of death,  
and no warrior can stir a hand;
  7. at your rebuke, O God of Jacob,  
both horse and rider fall into stupor.
  8. You are terrible!  
Who can stand before you  
once your anger is aroused?
  9. From the heavens you declare judgment;  
the earth fears and is pacified,
  10. when you, O God, arise to vindicate,  
to rescue all the earth's oppressed.
- Selah.
11. Surely, the land shall praise you with delight;  
a remnant shall gird themselves to dance in gladness.

12. Make your vows to the Lord your God and fulfil them;  
 let all around him bear offerings to the One who  
 is revered;
13. who severs the spirit of princes,  
 who is the Terrible One to the kings of the earth.

Verse 1. Title.

The meaning of  $\text{לְשׁוֹמְרֵי}$  has already been discussed with reference to Psalm xlvi 1.

$\text{לְשׁוֹמְרֵי}$  appears in six psalm titles. This is the plural of the noun  $\text{לְשׁוֹמֵר}$  (music) preceded by the preposition  $\text{לְ}$ . The root  $\text{לִשׁ}$  means "to touch" or "play a stringed instrument". Elsewhere in the psalms the noun is used in Psalm lxxvii 7 as a metaphor for meditation and in Psalm lxviii 13 to refer to a drunkard's song. Here the meaning is "with stringed instruments".

$\text{אֲסָפָה}$  is used in the titles of twelve psalms, namely, L, lxxiii-lxxxiii. There are various references to an Asaph in Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah. The original Asaph was one of David's chief musicians and was selected by the Levites to lead the music when David brought up the ark (cf. 1 Chron. xv 16-19, xvi 4, 5, 7, 37). Asaph's sons were leaders of four out of the twenty four courses of musicians (cf. 1 Chron. xxv 1ff., 2 Chron. v 12). The Asaph who was one of the king's seers was possibly a different person, though not necessarily so, for as the use of the word  $\text{לְשׁוֹמְרֵי}$  shows, music and meditation were associated. This association is shown also in the statement, "... to sing praises to the Lord with the words of David

and Asaph the seer" (cf. 2 Chron. xxix 30, 1 Chron. xxv 5, 2 Chron. xxxv 15). The sons of Asaph constituted a guild of musicians and they are mentioned during the reign of Jehoshaphat, in connection with Hezekiah's reform, at the passover of Josiah, at the return of the exiles and at the foundation of the temple (cf. 2 Chron. xx 14, xxix 13, xxxv 15, Ezra xxiv 1, iii 10 respectively). The Asaph psalms are generally prophetic in character, which could support the statement that Asaph was a seer as well as a musician. Authorship by Asaph is possible, but it is more likely that the psalms were simply a collection preserved and used by the Asaphic guild.<sup>1</sup>

LXX adds the words ὡς ἡ πρὸς τὸν Ἀσάφου, but this seems to be an interpretative comment rather than an accurate statement of the original title.

#### Verses 2-4

This section states that God has made himself known in Israel and Judah, that he has made Zion/Jerusalem his dwelling place and sphere of activity and that there he has defeated in war an undefined enemy.

Weiser rightly maintains that God's historical saving acts in Zion are here generalized in the cult as part of the Heilsgeschichte.<sup>2</sup> There is also, especially in the verb וַיִּתֵּן, an assumption that God has revealed his

1. See Kirkpatrick, The Psalms, pp. 427-30; Mowinckel, P.I.W. II, pp. 95ff.; Barnes, The Psalms II, p. 245; Oesterley, The Psalms I, pp. 4, 72.

2. Weiser, The Psalms, pp. 524-6.

nature as the God who acts decisively in history. This, as Mowinckel<sup>1</sup> and Eaton<sup>2</sup> claim, is presented as a cultic epiphany, another way of stating that the inviolability of Zion as experienced by men, was incorporated into the Heilsgeschichte.

Whether the mention of Judah and Israel in v. 2 is an ideal situation, or refers to the brief duration of the united kingdoms is not clear. If the latter is intended, the verse was probably written later as a reminiscence of the time of David. It is also possible that the mention of Israel implies that there were faithful adherents of the Jerusalem centred religion still in the north. Quite probably these three nuances of meaning can all be legitimately assumed.

In v. 3  $\square \dot{\zeta} \psi$  and  $\eta \dot{\iota} \delta$  are given as synonyms for the Holy mountain-city of God. The meaning of "Zion" has already been discussed fully in relation to Psalm xlviii 3. The name "Salem" is an abbreviation for Jerusalem and it is perhaps an ancient name for the city in its own right. The name appears elsewhere only in Gen. xiv 18 where it is defined as the kingdom of Melchizedek. This mysterious figure is linked with Zion in Psalm cx. Adonizedek of Jerusalem (cf. Josh. x 1) may have been a priest-king of the same family as Melchizedek. It seems from Psalm cx that the Davidic kings took over this title from the Jebusite kings in order, perhaps, to bind Jebusite and Israelite

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1. Mowinckel, P.I.W. I, p. 142.

2. Eaton, Psalms, p. 192.



together politically, and also to establish a royal priestly supremacy which did not damage the status of the Aaronic priesthood. Hence, the statement, "You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm cx 4).

The appearance of the form Salem supports the contention that "Jerusalem" is a name with two original parts,  $\text{יְרֵמֶה}$  and  $\text{שָׁלֵם}$ . (Also appearing in late texts as  $\text{יְרֵמֶה}$  and  $\text{שָׁלֵם}$  .)

The theories about the origin of the first part of the name are as follows: (a)  $\text{יְרֵמֶה}$  comes from the Assyrian uru via the Canaanite 'uru. In Assyrian this means "city". The original Hebrew form was 'ir with a Sumerian vowel of prolongation inserted. Later the  $\text{y}$  dropped out. The meaning could then be either "City of Peace" or "City of Salem". (b)  $\text{יְרֵמֶה}$  could be connected with several verbal forms. Firstly, it could be a form of  $\text{יָרַע}$  (fear), assuming a divine title, "Fear of Salem", (cf. Fear of Isaac). Secondly, it could be a form of  $\text{יָרָא}$  (see), assuming the meaning, "Vision of Peace". Thirdly, it could be a form of  $\text{יָרַח}$  (cast), assuming the meaning, "He casts peace"; or  $\text{יָרַח$  could possibly mean "found" or "establish" after  $\text{יָרַח}$  on the inscriptions of Zinjirli,<sup>1</sup> thus giving the meaning, "Salem has founded". (c)  $\text{יְרֵמֶה}$  could be related to the common Semitic root 'ur (light), giving the meaning "flame" or "hearth". If Ariel in Is. xxviii 2 is a form of Uriel, this would give a good parallel as "Hearth of El". There could also be a reference to a divinity of light (cf.

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1. B.D.B. p. 434.

Is. xxxi 9 where Yahweh's flame (  $\text{נֹרָא}$  ) is in Zion).

(d)  $\text{שָׁלוֹם}$  could really be  $\text{שָׁלָם}$  , giving the meaning "Possession of Peace".

Each of the above can be related to either of the two possible meanings of  $\text{שָׁלוֹם}$  , which can mean: (1) peace or safety (2) the name of a god. As an analogy for the latter there is the Mesopotamian šulman, the god of the netherworld, and the Ugaritic šlm who was paired with šahar, god of the dawn<sup>1</sup> (=  $\text{נֹרָא}$  ?). Possibly the meaning "peace" or "safety" was originally closely associated with the god's name.<sup>2</sup> The most convincing of these meanings is, "City of Safety". This connects  $\text{שָׁלוֹם}$  with  $\text{שָׁלָם}$  , so prominent in the kingship ideology as Yahweh's gift of prosperity and peace; and further, it is in line with the dogma of Zion's invulnerability which is clearly present in this psalm. Moreover, it thus forms an excellent parallel for Zion, which originally meant "fortress".

There is some justification for N.E.B.'s relation of  $\text{סֶלֶט}$  and  $\text{מַחֲבֵלִים}$  to the terminology of an army camp, although "battle headquarters" is not a very accurate rendering of the Hebrew. Usage of these two words would rather support metaphors relating to a lion's den or lair (cf. Psalms x 9, civ 22, Amos iii 4). On the other hand, the Hebrew words have an ambiguity which is difficult to express in English. To fasten the statement too firmly to the lion metaphor seems inept. Therefore, the two words "covert"

1. See Driver, C.M.L., Shachar and Shalim ii 18-19.

2. For full details see Adam Smith, Jerusalem I, pp. 250ff.; Burrows, Gospel of Infancy, pp. 118-23.

and "retreat" have been selected as best expressing the nuances of the Hebrew.

V. 4 constitutes a summary of the "inviolability of Zion" concept. This has been discussed in relation to Psalms xlvii 5-8 and xlviii 5-9 and there is little to be added. The various positions held by scholars with reference to these two passages are similar in relation to this verse.

□□ψ with Hē locative normally means "thither", although many authorities argue that this may mean "there" in an emphatic sense.<sup>1</sup> At any rate, some scholars are not happy about the form here and have tried to connect the consonants with the verb □□ψ, attaching it to the previous line. Johnson, for example, points □□ψ and translates: "And as for his lair, in Zion hath he set it".<sup>2</sup> Another possibility is that the verb □□ψ should be □□ψ□, being the niph'al infinitive absolute and serving all the nouns in the line: "There, the lightning arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword - all weapons are broken". This meaning seems the most acceptable.

יִצְוֶה, the plural construct of יָצַו, in its relationship with יָצַו, can only refer to arrows, that is to say, if יָצַו is accepted as meaning "bow". N.E.B., in fact, takes יָצַו to mean "arrow" and יָצַו to mean "flash", translating "flashing arrows". But elipsis in Hebrew poetry is common enough to justify יִצְוֶה as a

1. B.D.B. p. 1027; K.B. p. 983; G.K. 90d.

2. Johnson, S.K., p. 32.

metaphor for arrows in its own right. Its true meaning is "flame" or "firebolt"<sup>1</sup> (cf. Song of Songs viii 6, Psalm lxxviii 48). Indeed, the word is often connected with thunder and lightning. Weiser, translating, "lightnings of the bow", perceives the origin of the word in the name of a god of storm clouds.<sup>2</sup> That  $\text{q}^{\text{w}}\text{?}$  may have been originally a divine name is supported by Delitzsch, who maintains that it was a Phoenician-Cyprian divine appellation.<sup>3</sup> It is also interesting to note, in view of the comments on Salem, that there was an Egyptian god called ršp šlmn.<sup>4</sup> Barnes associates the arrows with those actually ignited in order to set fire to a fortress.<sup>5</sup> The best explanation of the metaphor is to assume a comparison between "flashing" arrows and lightning striking.

$\text{m}^{\text{m}}\text{m}^{\text{b}}\text{?}$  could be taken literally to mean "war" or "battle", in which case it would refer to God putting an end to war. However, in association with the verb  $\text{?}^{\text{b}}\text{?}^{\text{w}}$  this does not seem very apt. It is more plausible to accept it as a reference to war weapons in general. This destruction of weapons of war is an ingredient of eschatology and probably here represents an early form of this doctrine.

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1. B.D.B. p. 958; K.B. p. 911.

2. Weiser, The Psalms, pp. 524-6.

3. Delitzsch, The Psalms II, pp. 394-6.

4. Burrows, Gospel of Infancy, pp. 118-23.

5. Barnes, The Psalms, pp. 365-6.

### Verses 5-10

This section pictures God as the Warrior who fights for Israel. There may be a reminiscence of a particular battle; perhaps, because of  $\psi$  (ה) in v.4, in Jerusalem itself; but the reference to the Red Sea tradition in v. 7 seems irrefutable and this suggests that the earlier nomadic traditions were joined with the Zion tradition, and that there were presented together in a cultic epiphany as part of the Heilsgeschichte.

V. 5 presents an acute textual problem which has been given different solutions. As the general picture is of God as a mighty warrior, any acceptable translation must take account of this fact.

$\text{נאור}$  has been accepted as it stands by many authorities (cf. Symmachus, Aquila, Jerome and LXX). However, a reference to "light" or "glory" does not relate very well to the context. It is proposed, therefore, to emend to  $\text{נור}$  with Targum and N.E.B. This emendment is strongly supported by the use of  $\text{נור}$  in vv. 8 and 13.

The words which cause the greatest difficulty are  $\text{הרר יטר}$ . Some commentators adhere to the literal translation, "mountains of prey". Delitzsch explains it as a metaphor for high handed potentates.<sup>1</sup> Barnes assumes it refers to hills covered with spoil that has been left behind.<sup>2</sup> Neither of these interpretations is very convincing, although Anderson more plausibly suggests that "mountains of prey" attached to the beginning of the next

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1. Loc. cit.

2. Loc. cit.

line would make it more acceptable.<sup>1</sup> A second main interpretation by Kraus,<sup>2</sup> following LXX's *ὁρῶντες αἰώνων* (Vulgate - a montibus aeternis), assumes that there has been confusion between *רֶץ* which means "prey"<sup>3</sup> in Gen. xlix 27 (cf. Zeph. iii 8, Is. ix 5, xxxiii 22) and *רֶץ* meaning "eternity", a substitution of *רֶץ* for an original *רֶץ* having taken place. R.S.V. accepts this interpretation. A third suggestion by Gunkel is that the text should read *אַרְיֵה טֶרֶף אֶשְׁתִּיזֵל*, translating, "...der raberische Löwe ist (selber) geplündert". The actual words *אַרְיֵה טֶרֶף* appear in Psalm xxii 14.<sup>4</sup> This, however, requires a substantial consonantal emendation. A fourth possible translation is given by N.E.B.: "...men that lust for plunder stand aghast...". There is, in fact, a fifth and more convincing explanation. The original text may have been *מַהֲרֵר רִי טֶרֶף*, or, assuming haplography but giving the same essential result: *מַהֲרֵר רִי טֶרֶף*. This provides the translation: "Terrible, majestic, you tear apart like a rushing mountain torrent...". A good analogy for this simile exists in 2 Sam. v 20: "The Lord has broken through my enemies before me like a bursting flood". There is not space here to argue the meaning of *רִי* fully.<sup>5</sup> It may be said briefly that it is a hapax legomenon which

1. Anderson, Peake's Commentary, 375a.

2. Kraus, Psalmen I, pp. 524-8.

3. Or "booty".

4. Gunkel, Die Psalmen, pp. 329-32.

5. At the time of writing, an article is due to appear in V.T. 1974: "The meaning of *rî* and the dubiety of the form *harrê* and its variants".

appears in Job xxxvii II. According to B.D.B. the word is denominative from  $\text{נָחַל}$  (be saturated) and this is the only clue as to its meaning.<sup>1</sup> It if it possible that  $\text{נָחַל}$  could mean "stream", the Job text would read more meaningfully:

"He causes the thick clouds to swell the streams;  
and the clouds spread abroad his mist".

The fifth translation suggested for  $\text{נָחַל נְהַרְהָרִי}$  has been accepted.

V. 6 describes the effect of God's action on his enemies. Brave men are plundered and plunged into the sleep of death.

$\text{נָחַל נְהַרְהָרִי}$  is an unusual form but not unique in the Old Testament. It is the third person plural of an Aramaic form of the verb with a passive meaning. It is quite possible that in the process of transmission an Aramaic speaking scribe wrote  $\text{נָחַל}$  for  $\text{נָחַל}$ . Another example of this change of form exists in 2 Chron. xx 15 ( $\text{נָחַל נְהַרְהָרִי}$ ) where the context demands the third person. The meaning, then, of this hithpo'el verb is, "they are plundered".<sup>2</sup>

The metaphor of "sleep" meaning "death" is not uncommon (cf. Jer. li 39, 57, Neh. iii 18, Psalm xc 5).

The description continues with the statement that the men of war are unable "to find their hands". Less likely is the meaning, "All the men of war could not find the enemy with their hands". LXX has  $\epsilon\upsilon\theta\epsilon\sigma\iota\nu \sigma\upsilon\delta\epsilon\nu$ ...

$\tau\alpha\iota\varsigma \chi\epsilon\rho\sigma\iota\nu$  (they have found nothing with their hands).

1. B.D.B., p. 924.

2. Ibid., p. 1021.



Perhaps Josh. viii 20 helps to clarify the expression.

יָדָם בְּיָדָם in that verse means "in their power". Further, the English, "It is not in my hands", and, "He could not find his feet", both help to make acceptable the implication that the men are powerless, unable to stir a hand.

V. 7 undoubtedly recalls the Red Sea incident. Miriam's short song in Ex. xv 21 states: יְהוָה יִרְכָּב וְיִרְכָּב וְיִרְכָּב. יְהוָה יִרְכָּב in v. 7 (Psalm lxxvi) and יְהוָה יִרְכָּב in v. 6 could possibly refer to the mysterious plague which attacked Sennacherib's army in 701 B.C. On the other hand, the description could be a generalized version of a number of campaigns against the city. At any rate, there is a good case here for arguing that the Red Sea tradition of God's saving acts was united with those peculiar to Zion.

יְהוָה יִרְכָּב וְיִרְכָּב וְיִרְכָּב uses exactly the same form as Psalm xviii 15 where God rebukes the natural forces of the world. The reference in Psalm xviii and the parallel in Is. L 2 both refer indirectly to the control of the waters of the Red Sea. Further, there is enough general similarity of vocabulary in Psalm lxxvi to suggest that here are stated in abbreviated and evocative form the united traditions of the theophany, the rescue at the Red Sea and the various saving acts of God in Zion.

In vv. 8-9 God's saving acts are placed in relation to the moral sphere. God's previous acts of salvation are a pattern for the grand acts of the judgment of mankind and the vindication of the oppressed. These terms are not parochial but are intended to be of universal significance, as the double use of יְהוָה יִרְכָּב shows (cf. on Psalm xlvi 3, 9,



10, 11). It is difficult to see how vv. 8-10 can refer to past events, as claimed by R.S.V. If the prophetic perfect exists at all, the prophetic words of v. 9 are surely an example. On the other hand, vv. 5-7 are probably past in general reference but with a kind of prescient, apocalyptic vision. The translation places the whole of vv. 2-10 in the present tense in order to show that this description is intended to refer to an eternal truth; vv. 11-12, however, are referred to the future because the logical relationship at the human level, between vindication and joy at vindication, is on the time line.

In v. 8 the first word יָדָה is deleted as being dittographical, after B.H.S.

### Verses 11-13

It is difficult to agree with Briggs that these verses are a gloss.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the difficulty of v. 11 fails at first sight to make the continuity of thought very clear. In fact, v. 11 is joyful in meaning like the following verse, so that the statement follows logically upon the promise of vindication as an appeal to give praise and thanksgiving to God for his salvation. All men owe tribute to God who is the power above all earthly powers. It is tacitly assumed that the temple on Zion will be the universal centre for worship.

Some of the main ways of interpreting v. 11 are as follows.<sup>2</sup> First of all, the traditional translation of the

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1. Briggs and Briggs, The Book of Psalms, pp. 165-70.

2. A survey of possible interpretations is given by Emerton, V.T., XXIV 1974, pp. 136-46.

English versions, as represented by A.V., P.B., R.V. and R.S.V., has accepted  $\text{חַרָּא}$  as "wrath" or "fierceness". In such a case, the first stichos could mean that the wrath of men allows God to be even more majestic by comparison, or that rebellious men are witnesses to God's power. The second stichos could be taken to mean that God always has wrath left over when human wrath is exhausted. The main faults with this interpretation are: (a) This is a non sequitur in relation to the previous verse. (b) The interpretations of the line sound unrealistic. (c) The word is pointed in two different ways - as a singular construct and as a plural absolute.

The second main interpretation accepts  $\text{חַרָּא}$  (wrath) in the first stichos, making it descriptive of Edom ( $\text{אֶדוֹם}$ );  $\text{חַרָּא}$  in the second stichos is interpreted as a reference to Hamath. The two places are then supposed to represent the extremities of the Davidic empire. N.E.B. translates; "...for all her fury Edom shall confess thee, and the remnant left in Hamath shall dance in worship". The main criticisms of this translation are: (a) It would be expected that  $\text{חַרָּא}$  would mean the same in both stichoi, although it could be an example of paranomasia. (b) The position of the "selah" argues against the direct continuity of syntax between vv. 10-11. (c) Edom and Hamath are not very representative of either the nations of the world or of the Davidic empire and they are not clearly related to the context.

A third solution is offered by Gunkel.<sup>1</sup> He takes

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1. Gunkel, Die Psalmen, pp. 329-32.

נחמך in both stichoi as (נ)חמך , maintaining that it is poetic for נחמך and equivalent to the Aramaic נחמך (see). In the second stichos he emends נחמך to נחמך (proclaims you). He translates: "...the earth sees it and gives thanks to you; the remnant sees it and proclaims you". Gunkel rightly perceives that a joyful meaning to the verse fits the context. The main fault with this translation is that an emendation to נחמך is needed.

A fourth solution is proposed here. First of all, with Gunkel and B.H.S. נחמך could be changed to נחמך. Secondly, נחמך in each stichos could be emended to נחמך (desire, delight), assuming that there has been an error in audition, which would obviously be repeated.<sup>1</sup> Further, the change from נחמך to נחמך could have taken place by attraction to the vocabulary of vv. 8-9. The suggested translation is: "Surely the land shall praise you with delight; a remnant shall gird themselves to dance in gladness".

V. 12 is an appeal to the congregation to vow their allegiance to God and to bring tribute to him. In Psalm lxviii 29 kings are described as bearing gifts to God. The rulers concerned belong both to Israel and Judah as well as to foreign countries. So perhaps it is fair in Psalm lxxvi to assume a dual reference of the same kind (cf. Is. xviii 7). Some commentators would connect this statement with 2 Chron. xxxii 23: "Many brought gifts to the Lord in Jerusalem".<sup>2</sup>

1. Similar to a solution proposed by Nestle, Z.A.W., XVI 1896, pp. 321-7.

2. See, for example, Kirkpatrick, The Psalms, p. 456.

This would imply that the psalm was written in thanksgiving for the delivery from Assyria in 701 B.C. However, as has been seen, it is difficult to be as specific as this.

אֱלֹהֵינוּ is unlikely to be a direct reference to God's title, "Fear of Isaac", in Gen. xxxi 53 where יְיָ is used.

V. 13 again defines that aspect of God's nature which brings to nothing all earthly powers. Princes and kings, with all the tyrannical powers typical of the period, can be cut off in the prime of life without warning.

חָסַד can mean "cut off" or "make inaccessible". The former is more apt with חַיִּים, which can be taken in the sense of "the spirit of the living" or that which "dwells in the נַפְשׁ of men and animals".<sup>1</sup> R.S.V. accepts "cut off" whereas N.E.B. gives "break" (i.e. curb), which is really a modern synonym for P.B.'s "refrain". This meaning can be adduced from the verb which can also mean "enclose by fortifying". K.B. gives "humble" as a possible meaning on the basis of the Aramaic "be few".<sup>2</sup> R.S.V.'s translation is most appropriate.

### General comments

As the themes of Psalm lxxvi all focus on God's abode in Zion, it is fair, with Gunkel, to include it in the category of Zion psalms.<sup>3</sup>

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1. B.D.B., p. 925.

2. K.B., p. 142.

3. Gunkel, Die Psalmen, pp. 329-32.

The metre is mostly 3:3 with some variations, especially in v. 12 which is a rather heavy 4:4, and v. 8 which has one (or two) beats inserted between two stichoi of three beats.

The psalm falls naturally into three parts.

(a) vv. 2-4 make an introductory statement reminding the congregation that God dwells in Zion-Jerusalem (i.e. Salem v. 3), that he is the God of both Israel and Judah (v. 2) and that he has defended the fortress of Zion from assault (v. 4).

(b) vv. 5-10 constitute a hymn in celebration of Yahweh, the Victor and Judge. His prowess as a warrior is defined (v. 5) and qualified by a description of the deaths of the enemies (vv. 5-7). As a result of God's victory, somewhat ambiguously related both to past victory and future judgment, his standards of judgment will prevail and oppressed people will receive their rights (vv. 8-10).

(c) vv. 11-13 represent an invitation to those present to delight in worship and to keep their religious obligations - but also imply a universal statement that those remaining after the divine judgment will do the same. The last verse is a final reminder that all earthly powers are subject to God.

There are indications both in the vocabulary and in the themes of the psalm that previous traditions have been drawn together into a new combined form. The language of theophany as expressed in the Exodus tradition is echoed (cf. vv. 8-9 and Ex. xxi 18-20), the vocabulary of the Red Sea tradition is threaded into the pattern (cf. v. 7 and

Ex. xv 21) and at the same time the later Zion tradition of God's fortress dwelling is clearly apparent as the main theme which has neatly incorporated the earlier traditions.

There are three main ways of interpreting the psalm. Most older commentators assumed that it was inspired by the frustration of Sennacherib's army in 701 B.C., and the LXX title supports this view.<sup>1</sup> Such an interpretation is not to be dismissed lightly. The narrative in 2 Kings xix 35, which describes how the Assyrian soldiers were slain by the angel of the Lord in their sleep, certainly agrees with the description in Psalm lxxvi 5-7. But is this evidence sufficient to warrant interpreting the whole psalm as related to this event? Probably not. It is safer to agree with Kraus that what is being transmitted is a summary of religious history, although this scholar over-emphasizes the influence of pre-Israelite history.<sup>2</sup>

The second main interpretation assumes that the psalm describes a cultic battle. Many modern commentators subscribe to this view. Johnson associates Psalm lxxvi with Psalms xlvi and xlviii in relation to a dramatic ritual fight.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, Mowinckel believes that the three psalms were connected in a description of a mythico-

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1. See Kirkpatrick, The Psalms, p. 449; Delitzsch, The Psalms II, pp. 394-6; Briggs and Briggs, The Book of Psalms II, pp. 167-70.

2. Kraus, Psalmen, pp. 524-8.

3. Johnson, S.K., p. 95.

historical victory represented cultically.<sup>1</sup> Eaton also believes that the psalm should be interpreted liturgically rather than historically.<sup>2</sup> The views of these scholars on this theme have already been fully discussed in relation to Psalms xlvi and xlviii.

A third view of the psalm maintains that it is eschatological in outlook. Gunkel, for example, argues that the battle described is the last attack of the pagans and their defeat before Zion. On the whole, it seems more likely that the battle has an original historical basis. However, Gunkel is on stronger ground when he argues that the theme of judgment is eschatological. Even so, the reign of universal peace and the homage of the nations are not really eschatological in the way they are presented here, as Gunkel maintains.<sup>3</sup> In fact they are presented rather ambiguously. Yet, it is fair to state that an eschatological element is present. Kraus agrees that the psalm is to some extent eschatological, finding that the glorification of God transcends history and that a universal concept is present.<sup>4</sup>

Weiser takes a mediating view.<sup>5</sup> He recognizes the kinship of Psalm lxxvi with psalms xlvi and xlviii, but claims that there are historical, cultic and eschatological ingredients in the psalm. This, in general, is a sensible

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1. Mowinckel, P.I.W. I, pp. 85-7, 151.

2. Eaton, Psalms, p. 192.

3. Gunkel, Die Psalmen, pp. 329-32.

4. Loc. cit.

5. Weiser, The Psalms, pp. 524-6.



view to take, but perhaps Weiser is too specific when he tries to show that the battle described could be a reference to David's victory over the Philistines at Baal-perazim (cf. 2 Sam. v 27). It is better, in view of the lack of firm evidence, to recognize that historical events probably inspired the psalm, but that they have been so generalized in the description that it is not possible to ascribe the inspiration to one particular battle. As far as Weiser's claim that there are eschatological events in the psalm is concerned, it has already been noted in the discussion that these exist in vv. 9-11, but it must be recognized that these elements do not appear in Psalm lxxvi as a fully developed eschatological doctrine.

It seems probable that psalm lxxvi was used along with Psalms xlvi and xlviii to proclaim in the cult the basic facts of the dogma of Zion's inviolability, along with other related theological propositions. There is no internal evidence in this psalm to suggest the occasion when it was used, but it is most probable that it would be used at the autumn festival. (See on Psalm xlvi.)

#### Aspects of the Zion concept presented in the psalm

1. God's epiphany in Zion-Jerusalem (i.e. Zion = Salem) to Israel and Judah is described (vv. 2-4). God the warrior destroys all weapons of war.
2. The names "Zion" and "Salem" in parallel probably mean "City of safety and security" and this is related to the concept of inviolability (v. 3).



Associated themes indirectly related to the Zion concept

1. God is the warrior who fights for Israel (vv. 5-8).
2. The Red Sea tradition is recalled and seems to be incorporated into the Zion tradition as part of the Heilsgeschichte (v. 7).
3. A theophany is presented in traditional language but not all the ingredients are present (vv. 9-10).
4. God's saving acts are related to the moral sphere and are presented as a pattern for the judgment of mankind and the vindication of the oppressed (vv. 8-10).
5. Joy in worship is shown and tribute to God is given as a result of vindication actual and promised (vv. 11-12). This statement may have a universal application.
6. All earthly powers are subject to God's almighty power (v. 13).

Concluding comment on the Zion concept in Psalm lxxvi.

At the very centre of this psalm is the picture of God the warrior who dwells in Zion and who is ready to sally forth at any time in order to protect Zion, his chosen city. The imagery is quite primitive, Yahweh being described as having his "covert" and his "retreat" in Zion, much as the chieftain of a tribe would live in a mountain fastness. The tradition of God as the leader of Israel's war host is very ancient, going back to the era of the tribal league and even to the time of the Wilderness period. Two other traditions have been associated with this tradition, namely, the Sinai theophany and the deliverance at the Red Sea. The theophany of Sinai has been transferred to Zion while the victories of

the monarchical period are seen as new versions of the defeat of Egypt. This is an early form of the Heilsgeschichte in which God's saving acts are seen in very concrete terms, though the element of spiritual redemption cannot be ruled out, for redemption is given almost universal application (vv. 9-10).

This merging of traditions in order to form a new Zion tradition shows continuity in the growth of a Heilsgeschichte which is typical of the whole history of the Judaeo-Christian religious tradition. Earlier concepts are assimilated and given greater depth of meaning so that basic words like "salvation" (cf. v. 10) are used for several thousands of years with an apparently never-ending capacity for renewal. At any rate, in this psalm the God who dwells in Zion rises to save his people in a very practical sense.

The purpose of the psalm is to give thanks in Zion for Yahweh's saving acts in Zion. The remnant of Zion's people will, it is said, proclaim their joy at Yahweh's vindication. They are bidden to pay homage in the temple and to present gifts to the One who is more powerful than earthly princes and kings. Thus, the Zion concept is seen in its origin and growth to be inseparable from the worship of the people of Zion.

Psalm lxxxiv

1. For the choirmaster; according to the Gittith; a psalm belonging to the sons of Korah.
2. How much loved is your dwelling place,  
O Lord of hosts!
3. My being yearns, languishes for the courts of the Lord;  
my body and soul cry out to the living God.
4. Even the sparrow finds a home  
and the swallow has her nest,  
where she raises her young around your altars,  
O Lord of hosts, my king and my God.
5. Happy are those who stay in your house,  
forever praising you.
6. Happy are the men whose strength  
is stored in the secret place of their hearts.
7. As they pass through the desert valley  
they turn it into a fountain-head;  
yes, the early rain covers it with tender shoots.
8. They advance from rampart to rampart:  
"May the God of Gods show himself in Zion!"
9. O Lord, God of hosts, hear my prayer;  
listen, O God of Jacob!
10. Look with favour on our shield, O God;  
watch over your anointed king.

11. For a day in your courts  
 is better than a thousand days of my youth;  
 to wait in the porch of the house of my God  
 is better than a generation in the tents of wickedness.
12. For the Lord is both sun and shield;  
 God grants grace and honour.  
 He does not keep what is good  
 from those whose conduct is upright.
13. O Lord of hosts,  
 happy is the man who puts his trust in you!

#### Verse 1. Title

The title of Psalm lxxxiv, like those of Psalms xlvi and xlviii, contains a reference to the "sons of Korah". The implications of this title are discussed under Psalm xlvi and in the Excursus at the end of the discussion on this psalm.

The meaning of the ascription  $\text{לְבָנֵי קֹרַח}$  has already been discussed under Psalm xlvi.

The phrase  $\text{לְבָנֵי קֹרַח}$  can be interpreted in different ways. First of all, this could have originally read  $\text{לְבָנֵי קֹרַח}$  the plural of  $\text{קֹרַח}$  (wine press). LXX translates  $\text{ἐπεὶ τῶν ληνῶν}$  (concerning the wine presses). Oesterley recommends this interpretation and believes the word refers to a vintage festival.<sup>1</sup> Mowinckel, on the other hand, refers the word to Obed-edom the Gittite at whose house the ark

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1. Oesterley, The Psalms I, pp. 10-11; cf. Kirkpatrick, The Psalms, Introduction, p. xxi.

was kept before it was transferred to Jerusalem. He believes that the reference is to a reconsecration of the sanctuary and a commemoration of the removal of the ark from the house of Zion<sup>1</sup> (cf. 2 Sam. vi 10ff.). It is interesting to note that the parallel passage in 1 Chron. xv 16ff. Ohed-edom is listed as one of the gate keepers of the ark. However, it would be too speculative to connect him directly with authorship of the psalm. Other possible explanations are that גִּתִּית referred to: a melody from Gath, a musical direction, a musical instrument or the ark. Unfortunately, none of these explanations is finally convincing. It seems best, therefore, to transliterate as "according to the Gittith", leaving the explanation open.

#### Verses 2-5

The poet describes his deep love for the temple and its environs. He uses the homely imagery of birds nesting in the temple precincts both to express his wish that he, as they, could spend all his time there, and also to illustrate God's grace and compassion towards all living creatures. The verses describe the personal feelings of the writer, but it is possible that in the hymns at the beginning of the autumn festival these words were also intended to capture the imagination and express the religious joy of every pilgrim.

In v. 2 a delighted exclamation opens the psalm. How

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1. Mowinckel, P.I.W. I, p. 215.

wonderful it is to be in the temple for the festival again! The adjective  $\text{יָדָר}$ , here in the feminine plural, usually means "beloved" as in Deut. xxxiii 12, Is. v 1 and Jer. xi 15. In this context the word has often been translated "lovely", but N.E.B. is surely right to adhere to the meaning "beloved" (i.e. dear). The sense of v. 3 demands a preceding exclamation such as, "How much loved is your dwelling place!"

The plural  $\text{מִבְּרָכִים}$  is used of God's temple also in Psalms xliii 3 and cxxxii 5. The word is often used in the plural in the secular sense<sup>1</sup> but why is the plural used to describe the temple? It could describe a complex of buildings or it could be an amplification of the dignity of the temple.<sup>2</sup> Again it could simply be used for euphony.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, Eaton, following G.K., believes it to refer to a "level place with many points", presumably meaning the various projections of the building.<sup>4</sup> It is also possible that the word is a poetic archaism for which a suitable equivalent in English might be "pavilions". Of these, the most convincing explanation is that the word refers to a complex of buildings. The use of the root  $\text{בָּרַךְ}$  is interesting because this is the word used by P to describe the sacred tent (cf. Ex. xxv 9) which was filled with the  $\text{יָדָר}$  of the Lord (cf. xl 34-5). Later semantic development associated  $\text{יָדָר}$  with  $\text{שִׁכִּינָה}$  more closely in the rabbinic concept of the "shekinah". This association is

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1. B.D.B., p. 1015.

2. Kirkpatrick, The Psalms, pp. 504-6.

3. Barnes, The Psalms II, pp. 404-5.

4. Eaton, Psalms, pp. 208-9 and G.K. 122b.

also evident in John i 14 where the Word is described as "pitching his tent among us" (ἐσκήνωσεν cf. also סִכְּנָה = טִיבָה ).

As in Psalms xlvi and xlviii the phrase "Lord of hosts" is used in this verse and others.

In v. 3 the desire of the poet to be in God's courts is described. The language expresses strong emotion.

קִדְּוָה is from the root קִדְּוָה which in the Arabic meant "colourless", often applied to the sun or the moon or to silver, but also to the pallor associated with deep emotion. Late Hebrew supports the latter meaning.<sup>1</sup> The qal or niph'al can hence mean "to long for" as in Genesis xxxi 30.

קִדְּוָה from קִדְּוָה (to be at an end) here means "wasted away" or "exhausted" by longing.

קִדְּוָה is a little awkward. There is manuscript evidence for the omission of קִדְּוָה and the Greek, Syriac and Jerome appear to omit it. However, the general sense is clear.

קִדְּוָה refers to the courts or enclosures in the temple precincts, the root קִדְּוָה meaning "to enclose" or "surround" in other Semitic languages.<sup>2</sup> Delitzsch's argument that the word does not exclude a reference to the sacred tent used by David is not very convincing.<sup>3</sup> The word undoubtedly refers to the temple.

The tenses are unusual, two perfects being followed by

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1. B.D.B., p. 493; K.B., p. 449.
  2. B.D.B., p. 346; K.B., p. 325.
  3. Delitzsch, The Psalms II, pp. 472-3.

an imperfect. The perfects are probably gnomic, as in the next verse, which is to say that they express something that regularly happens.<sup>1</sup>

In v. 4 the poet uses a description of the birds that habitually nest in the temple area as a comparison with his desire to dwell there always. The reference to the altars must not be taken too literally. Some commentators have gone to great lengths to rationalize this reference to birds. Oesterley<sup>2</sup> and Kirkpatrick,<sup>3</sup> for example, have concluded that birds in the temple were considered sacred as in ancient Greece and modern mosques. Others have been concerned that birds might defile the altar. Yet others have found here symbolic reference to movements of the divine will. It is more probable that the poet observed sparrows and swallows nesting around the temple and used the image to express his own desire to live there, and also to illustrate God's providence for all living creatures.

In v. 5 all who live in God's house are described as blessed. This could refer either to cultic officials or to the inhabitants of Jerusalem who had ready access to the temple.

71Y (still) is supported by Jerome's "adhuc". However, LXX gives Εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων which presupposes 7Y - 7Y<sup>2</sup> and R.S.V. and N.E.B. accept this type of meaning. Delitzsch argues for 71Y, maintaining that despite the dark and gloomy present those who

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1. G.K., 106k.

2. Op.cit., pp. 378-80.

3. Loc. cit.



dwell there still sing God's praises.<sup>1</sup> However, it is more likely that the original text was  $\text{לֵךְ}$  and that the mater lectionis was wrongly inserted.

### Verses 6-8

These verses suggest that, by the faith of men who have strength in their hearts, a desert valley is turned into the fountainhead of a river. The equivalent natural cause of this change is the onset of the timely autumn rains which cause the valley to be covered suddenly with tender shoots of new growth. These spiritual and natural causes meet in the autumn festival in Zion where God will show himself and bring the desired rains. In all probability the psalm was used to welcome pilgrims at the beginning of the festival. It is difficult to find specific evidence for the "via sacra" which Mowinckel suggests existed, but his theory is plausible.<sup>2</sup> Kirkpatrick's suggestion that this is a parable about the life journey through faith to Zion has much merit.<sup>3</sup>

In v. 6 the men who have "strength" are described as happy or blessed.  $\text{יָשָׁר}$  could be from  $\text{יָשַׁר}$  (be strong) or from  $\text{יָסַר$  (take refuge); in this case probably the former.

Interpretation of this verse largely depends on the relation of  $\text{לֵךְ}$  to the rest of the sentence. Most commentators have identified this as the plural of  $\text{לֵךְ}$

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1. Op.cit., pp. 475-8.

2. Mowinckel, P.I.W. I, pp. 170-1.

3. Kirkpatrick, The Psalms, pp. 506-8.

(highway) from the root לָלַב (lift up, cast up). There is no doubt that the word means "highway", but what can it mean to say "highways" in their hearts? R.S.V. has to add the words "to Zion" in order to make sense of this. N.E.B. paraphrases by giving, "...whose hearts are set on pilgrim ways". LXX gives ἡν ἡ βῆμας, either connecting the word with the root לָלַב or translating from a postulated מַלְאָכָא. Symmachus gives τῆς τοῖβου σου - but this is just as hard to understand as the original. Targum suggests מַלְאָכָא (confidence), which is followed by Kraus.<sup>1</sup> None of the above is really satisfactory. It is much more likely that the text was dislocated at an early stage by an error in audition when a scribe wrote ח for ו. The text would then read:

... לוּ בַּכְּחֵם לֹוּט בְּלִבָּם חָ

It is a remarkable coincidence that these consonants, when redivided as above, make perfectly good sense. A literal translation would be: "...in the stored away place, the covering in their hearts". The full line can then be given:

"Happy are the men whose strength  
is stored in the secret place of their hearts".

לוּט is used in Is. xxv 7 in a similar sense, while חָמֵץ qal participle passive, appears in Deut. xxxii 34 in parallel with סָתָם (sealed up).<sup>2</sup> It is true that the incongruence between לוּט and חָ- is still a difficulty, but then such incongruence is not uncommon.

1. Kraus, Psalmen, pp. 581-7.

2. See K.B., p. 441.

In v. 7 the most critical word to interpret is נֶחֱלִי (LXX (ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ τοῦ κλαυθμῶνος), Vulgate (valle lacrimarum), Aquila, Jerome and Syriac seem to accept that the word is נֶחֱלִי (weeping), as used in Ezra x 1. There is some manuscript evidence for changing נ to נח, but what would this mean in relation to נַחֲלִי (spring)? This translation is not convincing except as a possible secondary meaning of a double entendre. The other main interpretation is to accept that נֶחֱלִי means "balsam tree" as in 2 Sam. v 24 where balsams are mentioned in connection with the valley of Rephaim.<sup>1</sup> This tree, which exudes gum (tears?) could have given its name to the valley because of the number of such trees there. Gunkel compares this to the valley of Shittim (נַחֲלִי = acacia).<sup>2</sup> The valley of Elah is also a fair comparison. R.S.V. transliterates, giving "the valley of Baca".<sup>3</sup> If there was, indeed, such a valley it was probably dry and waterless in the summer. The parallelism demands this and it is, therefore, fair to translate, "a desert valley".

The third stichos is difficult and B.H.S. suggests that the text is corrupt, though this is not necessarily so. נָא is probably used in the sense, "yea", in current English, "yes".<sup>4</sup> Oesterley's emendation to נָא נַחֲלִי (pools) is not necessary.<sup>5</sup> נֶחֱלִי could be translated "blessings" as

1. See Kirkpatrick, loc. cit.

2. Gunkel, Die Psalmen, pp. 367-72.

3. See also Kraus, loc. cit. and Gunkel, ibid.

4. See B.D.B., p. 169.

5. Oesterley, The Psalms II, p. 380.

by LXX, Jerome and Kraus or "pools" as by R.S.V., N.E.B. and Gunkel. However, it is more likely that the word should be parsed as the feminine plural of  $\text{תִּיב}$  (tender) preceded by  $\text{ת}$ . In Ezekiel xvii 22 this word is used of twigs and is translated at that place by N.E.B. as "tender shoot". Thus, the word refers to "tender shoots" encouraged to grow by the early rains in the desert valley. Kirkpatrick testifies that such sudden transformations in desert country are very real.<sup>1</sup> The picture is reminiscent of the transformed desert theme of Is. xxxv 1-2. This translation gives a better parallel than either "blessings" or "pools".  $\text{תִּשְׁכַּח$  (covers), understood as causative, really causes no difficulty, but N.E.B. transposes to  $\text{אֵרָא$  (err), while some manuscripts give  $\text{תִּשְׁכַּח}$ .  $\text{תִּשְׁכַּח}$  is given by LXX as "lawgiver", while others give "early rain". This confusion arises from the two meanings of  $\text{תִּשְׁכַּח}$ , namely: (a) to shoot, shed water (b) to teach. Dahood follows the former, but gives "Rain-giver" as a divine title.<sup>2</sup> However, "early rain" provides the best parallel and makes most sense.

The general picture, then, is of a desert valley converted by the early rain into a land where tender shoots suddenly cover the landscape. The connection between prayers for rain at Jerusalem and God's gift of rain is mentioned in Zech. xiv 17 in the context of universal worship. This idea in Psalm lxxxiv should be seen as evidence of God's

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1. Loc. cit.

2. Dahood, The Psalms II, pp. 281-2.

providential care and not as a magical answer to prayer. The imagery certainly suggests that the pilgrims are wending their way to Zion both in the immediate and in the ultimate senses. As far as the latter meaning is concerned, Psalm xxiii 4 is a valid parallel. Gunkel maintains that the description is reminiscent of the paradise theme as in the theme of the cosmic river in Psalm xlvi.<sup>1</sup> To a certain extent this is valid insofar as the theme of blessing is present in both passages.

The reference in v. 8 is probably to the arrival of pilgrims in Jerusalem.  $\text{לְחֵן-לְחֵן} \text{ לְחֵן-לְחֵן}$  means "from strength to strength" according to some commentators. This interpretation is supported by LXX (  $\text{ἐκ δυνάμεως}$  ) and Jerome (de fortitudine). However, there is a root  $\text{לְחֵן}$ , meaning "to whirl, dance or writhe" from which a word  $\text{לְחֵן}$  developed, originally meaning "a surrounding wall". The word is used of Zion in Psalm xlvi 14 and in Psalm cxxii 7. It could refer to the space between the outer and inner walls<sup>2</sup> or to a moat or rampart.<sup>3</sup> Briggs, following Rabbi Judah, suggests "from battlement to battlement".<sup>4</sup> N.E.B. accepts  $\text{לְחֵן}$ , translating, "from outer wall to inner wall". On the other hand, in 2 Chron. xxvi 10 Uzziah is described as building towers and wells in the wilderness for travellers and cattle. On this basis Dahood translates,

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1. Loc. cit.

2. B.D.B., p. 298.

3. K.B., p. 295.

4. Briggs and Briggs, The Psalms II, pp. 225-30.

"from village to village".<sup>1</sup> The most acceptable picture seems to be that the pilgrims are walking up the slopes to Zion through the various outer defence works and suburban buildings, with the additional nuance that they are overcoming obstacles. The best translation, therefore, is "from rampart to rampart".

In the second stichos  $\text{וְיֵרָא}$ , the third person, masculine singular niph'al of  $\text{וְיָרָא}$ , can be translated, "he will be seen", or, "he will show himself", or, "he appears". It is unlikely that the subject of the verb is "one" or "troop" as suggested by Delitzsch.<sup>2</sup> It is much more likely that  $\text{וְיָרָא}$  should be  $\text{וְיֵרָא}$  and that "the God of Gods" is the subject. LXX's  $\delta\phi\theta\eta\sigma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota\ \delta\ \Theta\epsilon\delta\varsigma\ \tau\omega\nu\ \Theta\epsilon\omega\nu$  supports this line of interpretation. Both R.S.V. and N.E.B. take this line of interpretation. The suggestion by B.H.S. that the verb should be changed to  $\text{וְיָרָא}$ , making the subject the same as that of  $\text{וְיָרָא}$ , is suggesting an easier reading which involves a change of text and is, therefore, suspect. It is possible, though not likely, that a qal verb was changed to the niph'al for dogmatic reasons, the presumption in that case being that it is impossible for man to see God.

Even so, the meaning of the verse is not readily apparent. The best sense is obtained if the verb is taken as jussive.<sup>3</sup> Probably, then, the second stichos shows the motive for the action in the first stichos. The pilgrims

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1. Loc. cit.

2. Delitzsch, The Psalms II, pp. 457-8.

3. See G.K., 107n.

have the hope of a revelation and this is what inspires their journey. In other words, the second stichos is a kind of inspiring prayer and is appropriately shown as direct speech.

### Verses 9-10

These two verses are an intercessory prayer for God's favour to be granted to the king. This accords very well with the previous section, which implied that one of the hopes of the autumn festival was the renewal of the land's fertility as a result of the autumn rains; for the welfare of the king was closely bound up with the אֶלֶּם both of the land and of the people.

It has been disputed whether אֶלֶּם refers to God or to the king. In Psalm lxxxix 18 אֶלֶּם is a title for the king, whereas in Psalms iii 3 and xviii 2 it is a title for God. However, the use of אֶלֶּם in parallel with וְצִלָּתִי implies that the king is meant. Otherwise the sentence reads awkwardly. It is to be deplored that N.E.B. takes away the poetic flavour by omitting any reference to a shield.

Wanke omits vv. 9-10 as a gloss, presumably because of the reference to the king.<sup>1</sup> Such a reference would argue against his late dating of the psalm. This, however, is a very dubious method of strengthening his argument.

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1. Wanke, D.Z.D.K., pp. 20-21.



### Verses 11-13

This section returns to the theme of the opening verses and extols the privileges of worship in the temple.

For two reasons v. 11 has proved difficult to translate. First of all, how is בְּחֵרְתִּי to be translated? Traditionally it is accepted as a verb attached to the next line, as in R.S.V. It is also possible to see it as a verb attached to the line where it stands, as in the Stuttgart Bible. However, parallelism of both sense and grammar demands a noun. N.E.B. accepts as a noun, translating "at home" and reading בְּחֵרְתִּי. This meaning could also be adduced from בְּחֵרְתִּי as suggested by B.H.S. or by pointing בְּחֵרְתִּי. The latter suggestion is made by Grollenberg who maintains that this is a parallel form to post-Biblical חֵר (free man) and that it should be translated, "in my own estate".<sup>1</sup> None of these suggestions makes a very good parallel for "tents of wickedness", unless these are interpreted as Gentile dwellings and it is assumed that the writer is from abroad. Another suggestion by Buchanan is to change the text to בְּבִמּוֹת אָוֶן (high places of iniquity) as in Hos. x 8.<sup>2</sup> Although this makes a good parallel, there is no justification for such a radical textual change. It is much more likely that the word is בְּחֵרְתִּי (= בְּחֵרְתִּי). This form is used with second singular masculine suffix in Eccles. xi 9 and xii 1, but written scriptio plena. Further, "a thousand days of my youth"

1. Grollenberg, V.T., IX 1959, p. 311.

2. Buchanan, V.T., XVI 1966, pp. 231-2.



makes a good parallel to "a generation ( גִּדְוָר ) in the tents of wickedness", for the years of youth are often regarded in retrospect as the time when individuals err. Also, it is well to note that the author uses the first person singular suffix in אֵלַי, giving a personal touch to the whole verse.

The second difficulty lies in translating הַמְּחַפֵּץ. It is difficult to see why, if a doorkeeper is meant, the author did not use שַׁמֶּרֶת הַפֶּתַח as in Jer. xxxv 4 (cf. 2 Kings xxii 4, xxv 18). This, indeed, is a Korahite psalm, and the Korahites were traditionally keepers of the premises round the temple.<sup>1</sup> It is, however, rather unwise to assume that this word, a hapax legomenon, refers to "doorkeepers". This hithpoel form probably implies that the writer would rather be "on the threshold,"<sup>2</sup> that is to say not included in the congregation, than spend a generation in the tents of wickedness, that is to say living a life of pleasure and dissoluteness. LXX's παρὰ τὴν ἑστῆσαν (to be an abject), followed by the Vulgate and Jerome, gives emotional colouring to this interpretation. It is probable, therefore, that the writer is referring to those unfortunate people who beg in such public places (cf. Acts iii 2, Matt. xxi 14). Even such a humble position is preferable to living away from God's house. The "one day" referred to could possibly be a festival day.

On the whole verse Gunkel notes that it is epigrammatic

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1. See Delitzsch, The Psalms II, pp. 478-80.

2. K.B., p. 665.

in form.<sup>1</sup> The hymn sometimes uses this kind of gnomic verse (cf. Psalms xix 11, cxix 72).

The structure of v. 12 seems clumsy. LXX is so different that the manuscript may have been damaged at some stage. B.H.S. suggests that יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ should be deleted in the first line, but both R.S.V. and N.E.B. translate, "the Lord God". However, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ is probably the subject of יְהוָה. B.H.S. also suggests that יְהוָה in the second line should be deleted. Repetition of the divine name here certainly seems unnecessary but יְהוָה is the subject of וְיָמְנוּ even if it is omitted in favour of a pronoun.

God is nowhere else described as  $\psi\eta\psi$ . The versions, except Jerome, avoid this. However, Mal. iv 2 states: "For you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise...". This may be using  $\psi\eta\psi$  as a metaphor for God and could justify the translation "sun" in this verse as a similar metaphor. In support of this Is. lx 1 uses "light" as a metaphor for God and 2 Sam. xxii 29 describes God as a lamp (but cf. Psalm xviii 29). Further, Ecclesiasticus xlii 16 uses "sun" as a metaphor for the "glory of the Lord in creation". On the other hand, probably on the basis of Is. liv 12, N.E.B. translates "battlement". This, however, narrows the description and really makes a doublet for "shield". K.B. suggests that the word is a metaphor for "a sun shaped shield".<sup>2</sup> On the whole, it is more fitting to accept "sun" as a symbol for God's illumination of men's

1. Gunkel, Die Psalmen, pp. 367-72.

2. K.B., p. 665.

hearts and the "shield" as a symbol for God's protection of his people. At any rate, such privileges are only given to those whose conduct is upright.

In v. 13 the psalm is rounded off by a repetition of the refrain of vv. 5-6 and by summarizing the spiritual message of the psalm, which is that true happiness can only come from faith in God.

### General comments

It can be agreed with Gunkel that Psalm lxxxiv is basically a Zion song.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, it is equally valid to describe it as a pilgrim hymn.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, as is often the case, other elements appear. As Kraus notes, v. 3 resembles a lament while vv. 5 and 13 contain blessings.<sup>3</sup>

As to the metre, the 3:2 pattern predominates, but 3:3 and 4:3 lines also appear.

The form as a whole does not admit analysis into regular strophes. Wanke can only achieve such an analysis by unnecessarily omitting some verses.<sup>4</sup>

The psalm can be divided conveniently into four sections as follows:

- (a) vv. 2-5 constitute a hymn of longing for the temple and its environs and praise the joy of pilgrimage and worship.

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1. Loc. cit.

2. See, for example, Wanke, D.Z.D.K., pp. 16ff.

3. Kraus, Psalmen, pp. 581-7.

4. Loc. cit.

- (b) vv. 6-8 describe the journey of pilgrims to the autumn festival, an analogy for the spiritual life journey with the hope of God's epiphany before the pilgrims.
- (c) vv. 9-10 are a prayer of intercession for the king.
- (d) vv. 11-13 constitute a hymn in praise of worship in the temple.

Most commentators interpret the psalm against the background of pilgrimage but there is less agreement as to how the psalm was actually used. Weiser, for example, believes it to be a hymn about pilgrimage but considers that it need not necessarily have been a piece of liturgy.<sup>1</sup> Oesterley believes that pilgrims from the surrounding towns may have sung this hymn on their way through the arid, summer countryside.<sup>2</sup> A further view is held by Mowinckel,<sup>3</sup> Johnson<sup>4</sup> and Eaton<sup>5</sup> who all maintain that the psalm was sung during a procession along a via sacra, that is to say during the final approach of the pilgrims to the temple on Zion. Kraus's view is somewhat similar in that he claims that the psalm was a temple entrance liturgy.<sup>6</sup> It may be concluded that the psalm was sung at the beginning of a festival, either on approaching or entering the temple. Certainly, it reminded the pilgrims of their journey and its purpose.

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1. Weiser, The Psalms, pp. 365-7.

2. Oesterley, The Psalms II, pp. 378-80.

3. Mowinckel, P.I.W. I, pp. 170-1.

4. Johnson, S.K., pp. 103-6.

5. Eaton, Psalms, pp. 208-9.

6. Loc. cit.

There is good evidence for a direct connection of the psalm with the Feast of Tabernacles. The desire to worship in the temple, so strongly portrayed in vv. 2-5, 11, is surely a description of the emotions and aspirations of the pious pilgrim as he makes his annual (?) visit to Zion. The picture of the desert valley transformed by the early rain in vv. 6-7 not only places the occasion for singing the psalm in the autumn, but also connects strongly with one of the main themes of the autumn festival, that is to say with a petition for God's blessing on the land. Moreover, the intercessory prayer in vv. 9-10, with the king as its subject, also points to the festival; for the king's welfare and that of his land and his people were at the centre of the festival's themes.

There are also deeper spiritual themes running through the psalm. Worship is seen as the most important activity in life. The geographical pilgrimage to Zion is a type for the spiritual pilgrimage through life to the heavenly Zion. The good life is shown to have its spiritual rewards as well as the material benefits hoped for through the festival. Finally, faith in God gives strength to all who undertake the pilgrimage to Zion in both the immediate and ultimate senses.

#### Excursus on the relationship between Psalms lxxxiv and xlii-xliii.

Some commentators have found a close relationship between Psalms lxxxiv and xlii-xliii and most accept that Psalms xlii and xliii are to be regarded as one psalm.<sup>1</sup>

1. See, for example, Kirkpatrick, The Psalms, p. 226.

Delitzsch goes to great lengths to show that the two psalms (i.e. lxxxiv and xlii-iii) are by the same author, listing verbal similarities between the two.<sup>1</sup> He attempts to show that the Korahites, authors of these psalms, shared in David's banishment at the time Absalom's revolt. He emphasizes the tradition that the Korahites were keepers of the threshold before David's time (cf. I Chron. ix 17ff.) and even in the time of Moses (cf. I Chron. ix 19ff.). David is supposed to have continued this arrangement, as described in Psalm lxxxiv 11 and in I Chron. xxvi 1-19. Further, in the post-Exilic period the Korahites were still keepers of the gate in Jerusalem (cf. 2 Kings xxii 4, Neh. xi 19). In both psalms the author is presented as being banished from the temple and as longing for a return.

Kirkpatrick agrees that Psalm lxxxiv was written by the same author as Psalm xlii-iii but is less definite about the dating.<sup>2</sup> He believes that the two psalms were companion poems and he, too, lists similarities in vocabulary.

Buss, in discussing the Korahite psalms, also assigns them as suitable for the keepers of the sacred enclosures.<sup>3</sup> He believes there could have been a special Zion festival at which they were sung. He also notes that there are verbal similarities between some of the psalms, especially a strong personal element in the use of the first person singular suffix. However, he believes the dating of the

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1. Delitzsch, The Psalms II, pp. 59-62, 472-3.

2. Kirkpatrick, The Psalms, p. 226.

3. Buss, J.B.L., LXXXII 1963, pp. 382-92.

psalms to be varied and notes that their themes are also varied.<sup>1</sup>

Russ's approach is less specific than either Kirkpatrick's or Delitzsch's but he does assume a special relationship between the two psalms under discussion.

What justification is there for thus assuming a correspondence between the two psalms? First of all there is their designation as Korahite. Because of the association of the Korahites with "keeping the threshold", much has been made of the use of קֹהֲלֵי הַשָּׁעַר in Psalm lxxxiv, but it has already been shown that this word probably has no connection with doorkeepers as such. Does the designation "belonging to the Korahites" indicate Korahitic authorship. If so, there is an amazing variety of subjects in the psalms. For example, Psalm xlv, a royal psalm for a king's wedding, is very different from any of the others. Even Wanke, who argues for Korahitic authorship for some of the psalms, admits that Psalm xlii-iii is probably not by the same author as Psalm lxxxiv because of its difference in outlook.<sup>2</sup> Mowinckel is probably right when he claims that the Korahitic psalms were part of the repertoire of the sons of Korah and that they were probably not written by them.<sup>3</sup> They could, more likely, have been related to the Korahites in their capacity as singers. Heman, son of Korah, was such a singer (cf. Psalm lxxxviii 1,

1. See also Kirkpatrick, loc.cit.

2. Wanke, D.Z.D.K., pp. 9ff.

3. Mowinckel, P.I.W. II, p. 97.



1 Chron. vi). In short, the word "Korah" in the titles of both psalms does not establish any close relationship between them.

Secondly, Delitzsch argues that both psalms contain the idea of banishment from the temple. This is almost certainly true of Psalm xlii-iii (cf. xlii 4, xliii 3), but the man banished was scarcely a doorkeeper, but rather a leading priest. As to Psalm lxxxiv, there is little evidence for this theme. The longing for the temple is more likely related to a pilgrim's desire to be in Zion again.

Thirdly, the verbal similarities listed by Delitzsch<sup>1</sup> and Briggs<sup>2</sup> are by no means proof of common authorship. They could just as easily be the result of a common psalm vocabulary or the author of the later of the two could have been influenced by the earlier.

Fourthly, it is true that there is a strong personal element in both psalms, but it is also true that there is a personal element in many psalms; and in any case the persons writing in each psalm had different motives for writing. Psalm xlii-iii is an individual lament whereas Psalm lxxxiv is a pilgrim psalm. This is the most decisive argument against necessary common authorship. In other words, if one man wrote both psalms there is little within the psalms to show this.

There is, in one sense, a similarity of theme between

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1. Loc. cit.

2. Briggs and Briggs, The Psalms I, pp. 225ff.



the two. It could be argued that Psalm lxxxiv was a continuation of Psalm xlii-iii, the former expressing the fulfilment so longed for in the latter. However, the above arguments seem to show a different background and motivation behind each psalm which argues against any continuity of theme.

#### Aspects of the Zion concept presented in the psalm.

1. The opening verses present a hymn of longing for the temple (on Zion) and its environs. The joy of worship is expressed (vv. 2-5).
2. A pilgrimage to Zion is described. This means travelling through an arid valley where the pilgrims are sustained by the hope of God's epiphany in Zion (vv. 6-8).
3. The psalm closes with a second hymn in praise of worship in the temple (vv. 11-13).

#### Associated themes indirectly related to the Zion concept.

1. A prayer of intercession for the king is presented (vv. 9-10).
2. Morality is related to prosperity. True happiness only comes from faith in God (vv. 11-13).

#### Concluding comment on the Zion concept in Psalm lxxxiv.

Zion as God's dwelling is presented as an object supremely worthy of the love of a pilgrim to Zion. When he is away from Zion he constantly thinks of its temple courts and wishes that he could worship there all the year

round instead of merely once, or perhaps twice, in the year. Even the birds which nest around the temple are to be envied for their permanent proximity to the altars of God.

Zion is truly a symbol of the faith that lights the heart of every Israelite, however far away he lives from the centre of worship. When the pilgrim makes the long journey to Jerusalem through the arid countryside, the thought of Zion, his goal, gives him the strength to persevere. Already, before the festival and before the autumn rains, his imagination sees the desert transformed into a fertile land as, indeed, it shortly will be transformed by God's illimitable and beneficent power.

A comparison with the pilgrimage through life is probably implied. In Christian terms this would be seen as a pilgrimage to the heavenly Zion. The psalmist, however, is thinking more in terms of the blessings of this world. The faith of the pilgrim is not necessarily visible to the other person. The man of faith has his inner springs of strength.

The hope of arrival in Zion brings the hope of being closer to God. It is in Zion that God will reveal himself; it is there that he will pour out his blessings upon the land and upon the people through the medium of the autumn festival and through the mediation of the king.

A love of Zion's temple and its worship permeate<sup>s</sup> this psalm and this is surely very close to love for God himself. In all ages this psalm will be used to help worshippers to delight in God's presence in many houses of prayer which, even if they are not literally on Zion's hill, at least depend on a similar divine interest in the affairs of men.

Psalm lxxxvii

1. A psalm belonging to the sons of Korah. A song.

God's foundation stands on the mountain of the river  
of holiness;

2. the Lord loves the gates of Zion  
more than all the dwellings of Jacob;
3. their glories he speaks in you,  
O city of God. Selah.
4. "I mention Egypt and Babylon among those who know me;  
indeed, Philistia and Tyre, with Ethiopia - these  
were born there".
5. And of Zion he shall say, "One man after another  
was born in her":  
for the most high himself shall fashion her.
6. The Lord shall reckon, when he makes a return of  
the peoples:  
"Each of these was born there". Selah.
7. Princes and commoners alike, each has his source  
in you.

Verse 1a. Title.

Like the other Zion hymns, Psalms xlvi, xlviii and lxxxiv, this psalm is designated as "belonging to the sons of Korah". The implications of this title have already been discussed.

### Verses 1b-3.

These verses are in the form of a short hymn in celebration of Zion-Jerusalem as God's especially chosen and established sanctuary. God loves this city more than any other place inhabited by the Israelites and more than any other sanctuary built by them. In fact, the glories of other cities have been concentrated into the one, glorious city of God.

It is possible that v. 1b is intentionally abrupt like Psalm xviii 2, but the suffix of יְהוָה is inadequate as an opening definition of the founder of city. Similarly, if the stichos is taken as part of the title, both the lack of God's name and the uniqueness that such a title would have, make such a proposal unconvincing. It is possible to accept יְהוָה בְּיָמָיו as the subject and main verb of both v. 1b and v. 2 but the Masoretic punctuation militates against this, as does the word order. Some scholars propose to move the various parts of the psalm to try to make it more cohesive. B.H.S., for example, proposes the transfer of v. 5c to follow v. 1, while N.E.B. moves v. 1b to follow v. 2, together with other dubious manipulations of the text. On the whole, it is more likely that some statement which preceded this verse has been irretrievably lost. This could have been another stichos or alternatively it is possible that the psalm was part of a connected series which was later broken up. It could, for example, have followed Psalm xlvi, the last verse of which mentions God, a possible reference for יְהוָה.

In the circumstances it is best to provide the word "God" as the obviously intended reference of the suffix. The word could, indeed, be pointed  $\text{יְהוָהִים}$ , a plural of  $\text{יְהוָה}$ . This is presupposed by the Syriac and Greek. Alternatively, it is possible to read with Gunkel<sup>1</sup> and N.E.B.  $\text{יְהוָהִים}$ , but this seems unnecessary. M.T. probably has the correct reading which is a hapax legomenon. This is possibly a poetic form which, like  $\text{יְהוָה}$  derives from the root  $\text{יָבַד}$  (to establish, found, fix). It is obvious that the "foundation" is Zion.

$\text{יְהוָהִים}$ , the construct plural of a poetic form of  $\text{יְהוָה}$  (cf. Deut. xxxiii 15), is considered by Briggs to be a literal plural because Jerusalem was built on several hills, all of which were regarded as sacred.<sup>2</sup> Briggs cites Jer. xxxi 40 in support of his argument, but it is more likely, if the text is correct, that the intention is to refer to a single Mount Zion, the plural being a poetic device to amplify the importance of the hill. An alternative would be to divide the word into  $\text{יְהוָהִים}$ , translating, "the mountain of the river of holiness". This accepts  $\text{יְהוָהִים}$  as a noun meaning, "waters, river, stream" (cf. the discussion on Psalm lxxvi 5). If this interpretation is correct, it is possible that here there is a reference to the cosmic river theme as in Psalm xlvi 5. On balance, this seems to be the most satisfying interpretation. However, the

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1. Gunkel, Die Psalmen, pp. 378-81.

2. Briggs and Briggs, The Book of Psalms, pp. 239-42.

translation must be viewed in relation to other uses of

רַחֵם.<sup>1</sup>

In v. 2 it is claimed that God loves Zion more than any other dwelling place of Jacob.

רַחֵם, a participle, may indicate the continuous nature of God's love. שַׁעַר יְרוּשָׁלַיִם is an example of metonymy, which is a common enough figure (cf. Deut. xii 15, xvi 18), representing the whole city by mentioning one of its parts. The gates of a city were important as the place of judgment. It is also possible that Zion here refers to the temple hill and that the reference is to the temple gates which were significant in processions (cf. Psalm xxiv 9). A similar ambiguity applies to מִשְׁכַּן יְרוּשָׁלַיִם which could refer to human settlements or to other holy places in Israel. On balance the former interpretation is to be preferred. It is also possible that the reference is to Israelite groups in other countries. If so, it is unlikely that the psalm is as late as the Greek period. It would be more likely to refer to the dispersion of Jews from the northern kingdom after 721 B.C. or to the Exilic period when Jews went to Babylon, Egypt and possibly to other places mentioned in v. 4 in order to find refuge. It seems probable, however, that מִשְׁכַּן יְרוּשָׁלַיִם refers to other cities in Israel and that v. 4 does not refer at all to a Jewish dispersion. (See further below.)

Before the meaning of v. 3 can be established it is

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1. At the time of writing an article is due to be published in V.T. 1974: "The meaning of rî and the dubiety of the form harrê and its variants".

necessary to examine the peculiar phrase נְכֹבְדֹת מְרִבָּר. As pointed, this gives two participles not in agreement with each other, the first being the feminine plural niph'al participle of רָבַר and the second, the masculine singular pu'al participle of רָבַר. This construction has sometimes been interpreted as an impersonal use of the passive with נְכֹבְדֹת מְרִבָּר as a retained accusative. LXX's ἐλαλήθη (cf. Jerome's "dicta sunt") seems to support this. On the other hand, a similar translation could be obtained by assuming the pi'el participle, i.e. "One speaks glorious things...". However, a close examination of the text suggests that these words have been wrongly interpreted by the Masoretes. If the text is written:

נְכֹבְדֹת מְרִבָּר בָּךְ

the translation reads, "Their glories he speaks in you, O city of God". The suffix refers back to מְרִבָּר which is masculine. The subject of רָבַר is a pronoun for הוּא of v. 2. It is worth noting that the masculine plural niph'al participle of רָבַר with third person masculine plural suffix is used as a noun in Psalm cxlix 8 where the word appears to mean "their noblemen". The literal meaning of the participle here is "glorious things". The meaning is now clear and the syntax not so awkward. All the glories of all the other cities (or sanctuaries) in Israel are disregarded by God. Instead, he speaks for Israel only in Zion. עִיר מְרִבָּר means not only the city of God's choice but also the city of his foundation and his dwelling place on earth.



### Verses 4-6

These verses, for the most part, are presented as the speech of God concerning the peoples of certain foreign countries which are symbolic for all the nations of the world. These countries are personified as individuals who are destined to become sons of Zion. In an anthropomorphic description God is pictured as recording the names of Zion's sons in a universal census. This is reminiscent of St. Paul's commonwealth of Israel in Ephesians ii 12.

Five countries are listed in v. 4. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that this is a universalistic view of God's potential kingdom. It is evading the plain meaning of the text to suggest that the reference is either to the Jewish dispersion or entirely to foreign proselytes in existence at the time of writing. However, it is possible, as Weiser suggests, that this vision of the eschatological hope was first inspired by visiting proselytes.<sup>1</sup> The psalm could be pre-Exilic and such a vision is not anachronistic. The promise to Abraham in Gen. xii 3, the description of God's providence working among the nations in Amos ix 7ff., many passages in the psalms which claim that the nations are destined for conversion (cf. xxii 27-28, xlvii 8-9, lxviii 32, lxxxii 8), numerous eschatological descriptions possibly belonging to Isaiah of Jerusalem (cf. ii 2, xi 10, xviii 7, xix 18,

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1. Weiser, The Psalms, pp. 582-4.



23-4, xxiv 14-15): all make a pre-Exilic date feasible. At the same time, it is worth noting that Isaiah's selection of world powers includes Assyria rather than Babylon, which may suggest for this psalm a date later than Isaiah but before the Exile. Weiser could well be right when he suggests that the psalm represents the cultic equivalent of the prophetic eschatological hope,<sup>1</sup> in which case this Zion psalm, together with the others under discussion, may have developed as a series for use at the autumn festival, thus proclaiming God's universal rule.

יְהוָה, the first person singular of the future hiph'il of יָדַע, means here "to make mention of", and this meaning is usually to be taken in an honourable sense (cf. Psalm xlv 18).

רָחַב undoubtedly means Egypt in this context. In other contexts the word describes the mythological sea monster (cf. Psalm lxxxix 10, Job xxvi 12) or "arrogance" personified. The key text for explaining Rahab as symbolic for Egypt is Isaiah xxx 7.

וְיָדַע - יָדַע is quite acceptable, although LXX's *καὶ* λᾶδς (cf. Syriac) presupposes יָדַע.

וְיָדַע refers back to the five nations personified as individuals and means "each one of these" - a fair deduction from the literal "this one". Barnes interprets וְיָדַע as a reference to the Messiah, but this seems eisegetical rather than exegetical.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Loc. cit.

2. Barnes, The Psalms II, pp. 415-9.

In v. 5 God speaks again, announcing that "one man after another" shall be sons in Zion. This is a figure of speech either for many men or for all men. Such a state of affairs can come about because God himself, the highest power, will create the city of God anew.

יְיָ לְזִיּוֹן means "concerning Zion", <sup>?</sup> defining the area to which the predicate refers.<sup>1</sup>

יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ should rather be pointed יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, the subject of the verb being God, thus synchronizing all three verses in this section as God's speech.

יְיָ יִצְרֵנוּ in this context means "fashion" or "create" as in Psalm cxix 73<sup>2</sup> (cf. Job iii 15).

Some commentators try to find an explicit reference to a mother (אִמָּה) in the text. Barnes, for example, reads אִמָּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ for אִמָּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ because of similarity in the old script between א and א.<sup>3</sup> Briggs maintains that אֱלֹהֵינוּ has been omitted by haplography after אֱלֹהֵינוּ.<sup>4</sup> Gunkel agrees and quotes 2 Sam. xx 19 in support of his argument.<sup>5</sup> Certainly, LXX provides further support with Μητέρα ἑμῶν (cf. N.E.B.). However, Kirkpatrick argues that LXX has been subject to a textual error, the correct reading being μητέρα.<sup>6</sup> On the whole, it seems unnecessary to try to find אֱלֹהֵינוּ in the text. Kirkpatrick

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1. See B.D.B., p. 512.

2. Ibid., p. 466; cf. K.B., p. 427.

3. Loc. cit.

4. Briggs and Briggs, The Book of Psalms, pp. 239-42.

5. Gunkel, Die Psalmen, pp. 378-81.

6. Kirkpatrick, The Psalms, pp. 521-2.

is surely right when he maintains that the sense implies this in any case.

The picture of the census of the nations in v. 6 recalls a not uncommon description in the Old Testament of a Book of Life (cf. Ex. xxxii 32, Is. iv 3, Ezek. xiii 9, Psalms lxix 28, cxxxix 16, Ezra ii 62). It is difficult to better Delitzsch's comment that this verse represents the end of history when Zion will be the metropolis of all peoples.<sup>1</sup> This is an amazing vision for the pre-Christian era and anticipates St. Paul's dream of a world church by many hundreds of years.

The psalm ends in v. 7 with a summary of its message, addressed to Zion in the second person, as v. 3. All men, however noble or lowly, have their descent from Zion, the spiritual mother of the world.

The interpretation of וְשָׂרָרִים וְלִלְלִים in the sense "singers as well as dancers" may be a misunderstanding of the text. It is true that such a translation is possible if וְלִלְלִים is accepted as a noun derived from the polel participle of לָלַח (whirl, dance, writhe). It is also possible to translate "flute players" as in A.V. if וְשָׂרָרִים is accepted as the qal participle of שָׂרַח (play the pipe), (cf. 1 Kings i 40).<sup>2</sup> Moreover, as Mowinckel shows, there are passages in the psalms and elsewhere which illustrate the use of song and dance in the cult.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Delitzsch, The Psalms II, pp. 492-5.

2. B.D.B., pp. 296, 320; K.B., pp. 281, 303.

3. Mowinckel, P.I.W. I, pp. 8-12.

Yet, reflection on the text shows that such a translation breaks the thought sequence. It is more likely and more logical that  $\text{ܩܪܫܐ}$  should be  $\text{ܩܪܫܐ}$ , for which there is manuscript evidence together with support from the Greek and Syriac; and that  $\text{ܩܪܫܐ}$  is the qal participle of  $\text{ܩܪܫܐ}$  (defile).<sup>1</sup> There is evidence that these two words or their derivatives or synonyms are used in apposition to each other to represent two poles of society. In Is. xliii 28 princes (  $\text{ܩܪܫܐ}$  ) are defiled (  $\text{ܩܪܫܐ}$  ). In Ezek. xxviii the prince of Tyre (  $\text{ܩܪܫܐ}$  and  $\text{ܩܪܫܐ}$  ) is to be defiled (  $\text{ܩܪܫܐ}$  ). This polarization is similar to that in Leviticus iv where  $\text{ܩܪܫܐ}$  is defined in opposition to  $\text{ܩܪܫܐ}$  .  $\text{ܩܪܫܐ}$  then probably means "defiled people" or "commoners".

This argument is supported by the use of  $\text{ܩܪܫܐ}$  in the second stichos. The form in which the word appears has caused speculation, for the end  $\text{yôdh}$  cannot be a construct form and if it is a first person singular suffix, the line is incomprehensible without the insertion of the word "say" as in R.S.V. LXX's  $\text{κατοικει}$  presupposes  $\text{ܩܪܫܐ}$  in construct (?) form before  $\text{ܩܪܫܐ}$  (  $\text{ܩܪܫܐ}$  )! Gunkel<sup>2</sup> and R.P. seem to agree with B.H.S.'s suggestion to rephrase as  $\text{ܩܪܫܐ}$  which gives "all respond" or "all sing" (cf. N.E.B.). Syriac presupposes  $\text{ܩܪܫܐ}$  (humbled). However, if  $\text{ܩܪܫܐ}$  is accepted as correct but with the suffix as  $\text{wāw}$ , which in manuscript can easily be mistaken for

1. B.D.B., p. 320; K.B., p. 302.

2. Loc. cit.

yôdh, all becomes clear. כָּל-מַעְיָנֶו then literally means "everyone his fountain in you". It now remains to interpret מַעְיָן in context. It could mean "source of blessings", but more likely means "source of life". This is supported by the phrase מְקוֹר חַיִּים in Psalm xxxvi 10 and by צֵרַח יִצְחָק in Deut. xxxiii 28. The latter phrase undoubtedly refers to the descendants of Jacob. Such a meaning fits the context very well: all men have their source or descent, spiritually at any rate, from Zion.

#### General comments.

It can be agreed with Gunkel<sup>1</sup> and Kraus<sup>2</sup> that Psalm lxxxvii is a Zion song. In fact, it could probably be described as the Zion song par excellence for, from first to last, it is a song about the glories of Zion.

It is almost impossible to discern a regular metrical pattern in the psalm, which is perhaps an additional reason for some scholars to claim that the original poem has been mutilated. This, however, is not necessarily the case.

The thought sequence of the psalm has three distinct movements. In vv. 1-3 Jerusalem-Zion is pictured as the centre of Israel's life, chosen above all other cities of Jacob. In vv. 4-6 the concept broadens. Zion is not only the centre of Israel; it is also the centre of the world. All nations, in the fulness of time, will pay homage to God on Zion and will be privileged to be sons of

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1. Loc. cit.

2. Kraus, Psalmen, pp. 600-5.

Zion. This is no less than the salvation of the world. The third movement in v. 7 defines the inclusive concept of God's kingdom in individual terms. Any status, or lack of it, acquired by a man's earthly birth, does not affect his spiritual heritage in Zion. All men, rich and poor, noble and common, have their spiritual descent from Zion.

Many commentators suggest that the psalm is prophetic in character. Kraus, for example, argues that this is a sample of cult prophecy, not in the sense of a cult prophet giving an oracle in answer to an immediate question, but rather in the sense of a living cult tradition.<sup>1</sup> Insofar as the poem refers to an ideal situation of the future, this must be true, but strangely, Kraus refers the background to the Jewish diaspora, arguing strongly against the inclusion of proselytes within the psalm's schema. If, indeed, the psalm's ideas are thus limited, it is difficult to see why Kraus emphasizes its prophetic nature. Kirkpatrick believes that the psalm is prophetic in the sense that it is part of the Messianic hope.<sup>2</sup> This means that when the age of Messianic rule arrives, the franchise of Zion will be conferred on all nations. It cannot be denied that the psalm seems to anticipate Christian universalism, but did the author connect the universalism he describes with any kind of Messiah, Christian or otherwise? There is no evidence within the psalm that he did so. Delitzsch also puts for-

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1. Kraus, Psalmen, pp. 600-5.

2. Kirkpatrick, The Psalms, pp. 518-21.

ward a prophetic interpretation of the psalm, maintaining that it was used for missionary purposes.<sup>1</sup> However, such a pragmatic purpose is inconsistent with the poem's visionary depth.

Gunkel takes a different view, believing that the psalm refers to the present rather than to the future.<sup>2</sup> He conceives that the psalm describes a great feast to which Jews and proselytes from all nations flock. Gunkel gives the Persian period as the background of the psalm. Unusually, he does not perceive any eschatological flavour in the description of various peoples gathering on Zion, probably because he does not accept a fully universal interpretation.

Yet, the psalm speaks confidently of Jerusalem as a great spiritual centre, not only for Israel, but for the whole world as symbolized by a selection of surrounding nations. Parallels in the oracles of Isaiah of Jerusalem have already been pointed out, so it is not difficult to assign the universalistic concepts of the psalm to the period between Isaiah and the Exile, probably at a time when the nation was ascendant, as in the age of Josiah.<sup>3</sup> Certainly, v. 3 assumes that Jerusalem is standing and that it is the spiritual centre for the Jews.

There is no actual mention of the eschaton, but the psalm does present an idealized picture of God's future rule, and to that extent it is distinctly eschatological in tone, predicting the logical corollary of the assumption

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1. Delitzsch, The Psalms II, pp. 490ff.

2. Gunkel, Die Psalmen, pp. 378-81.

3. Briggs and Briggs, The Book of Psalms, pp. 239-42.



that the Most High God truly had chosen Zion as his dwelling upon earth.

This may, indeed, imply the ultimate proselytization of all mankind, although there is no need as Weiser does to quote such passages as 2 Kings v in order to show that proselytes existed before the Exile, for the vision here is of the future rule of God over all nations.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, it may be that the poet was first inspired to compose his universal vision by the train of foreign Jews in Jerusalem at festival time. On the other hand, he may have been inspired by some such occasion as that described in 2 Chron. xxxii 23 when foreign ambassadors brought gifts to Jerusalem. Whatever the spark which touched off the inspiration, the poet certainly had breadth of vision to conceive that nations who were traditionally at enmity with Jerusalem would one day be welcome there as sons of God. This is prophecy indeed, and it is probably fair to assume that this psalm provided a prophetic element in the cult.

The most likely occasion for the psalm's use would be the autumn festival, for the notion of God's universal rule is usually associated with the theme of God's enthronement, a generally recognized theme of the festival's celebrations (cf. Psalm xcvi 10).

#### Aspects of the Zion concept presented in the psalm.

1. God has founded his city in Zion on "the mountain  
of the river of holiness" (v. 1b).

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1. Weiser, The Psalms, pp. 579-82.



2. God's love for Zion, the central sanctuary, exceeds his love for all other Israelite dwellings and sanctuaries (vv. 2-3).
3. At an unspecified future time all nations, as symbolized by five important nations of the period, will be sons of Zion (vv. 4-6).
4. God's census of nations in the Book of Life will take place on Zion (v. 6).
5. All individuals, regardless of earthly status, ultimately have their spiritual descent from Zion (v. 7).

Concluding comment on the Zion concept in Psalm lxxxvii.

Zion is described as God's foundation, which stands on the cosmic mountain where the cosmic river pours out God's blessings on his people.

The main point of the psalm is to describe the relationship of Zion both to the people of Israel and to the peoples of the world.

The first main theme shows that Zion is the city above all other Israelite cities towards which God displays his love. This is the place above all others where he has chosen to dwell and it is from Zion that he rules both Israel and the world. Other cities in Israel have, in the past, been centres for the worship of Yahweh, but all the glories of praise and worship which have taken place in those other cities are now concentrated in Zion. It is in Zion that the people of Israel gather now for the great religious festivals. It is in the temple on Zion's hill

where the worship of Yahweh is supremely carried on throughout the year, without cessation.

The second main theme declares that all the nations of the world, though they may not realise it, really belong to Zion as citizens by right of birth. God is the creator of all men and of all races and hence Zion can be pictured as the mother city of all nations. This is a vision for the future: the true ideal of the conscious allegiance of all races to Yahweh in Zion is not yet achieved. Yet, in due course, by Yahweh's creative power, Zion will be formed into a universal centre where all men will acknowledge the One God. On Zion he will record in his Book of Life the names of all men and of all races who will owe their spiritual birth as sons of Zion to the true religion which emanates from Zion's temple.

The third main theme indicates that human standards of poverty or wealth, of high or low birth, are immaterial in God's assessment. All human beings, regardless of categories invented by men, have the ultimate right to be citizens of Zion.

Psalm cxxii

1. A song of ascents. Davidic.

I was overjoyed when they said to me,  
"Let us go to the house of the Lord".

2. Our feet have lingered  
within your gates, O Jerusalem!

3. Jerusalem, built as a city  
which is bound firmly together,

4. where the tribes go up,  
the tribes of the Lord;  
as ordained for Israel,  
to give thanks for the Lord's name;

5. for there they have installed  
a throne, a sign of judgment,  
a throne, a sign of David's house.

6. Pray for the welfare of Jerusalem:  
"May those who love you flourish!

7. Prosperity be within your walls  
and security inside your towers!"

8. For the sake of my brothers and my friends,  
I will declare, "Prosperity be within you".

9. For the sake of the house of the Lord our God,  
I will pray for your happiness.

Verse 1a.    Title.

This psalm is one of fourteen psalms designated  $\text{שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלֹת}$  (cf. cxx, cxxii-cxxxiv), while one psalm is designated  $\text{שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלֵה}$  (cxxi). It is probable that this group was originally a separate collection.

$\text{שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלֹת}$  appears to be the plural of the noun  $\text{מַעֲלָה}$  with the definite article. This word can either mean "a step" or "a stair" or "what comes up".<sup>1</sup> Aquila and Symmachus translate  $\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \tau\acute{\alpha}\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\beta\acute{\alpha}\sigma\epsilon\iota\varsigma$  (for the goings up). LXX gives  $\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\beta\alpha\theta\mu\acute{\omega}\nu$  (steps). In English the translation has been given variously as "degrees" (Geneva Bible and A.V.), "high degrees" (Bishops' Bible) and "ascents" (R.S.V.). Outside the psalms the word is used to describe the steps leading to the temple, to the altar, to a house, to a throne and to the city of David (cf. Ezek. xl 6, Ex. xx 26, 2 Kings ix 13, 1 Kings x 19-20, Neh. iii 15 respectively). In Amos ix 6 it is used of the "chambers" of heaven. In Ezekiel xi 5 it is used of thoughts "going into" the mind. In Ezra vii 9 it is used of "going up" from Babylon. In 2 Kings xx 9 it is used of the "steps" on a sundial. Barnes offers a number of possible meanings as follows:<sup>2</sup> (a) After the Mishnah the fifteen songs are related to the fifteen steps from the court of Israel to the court of women. (b) A reference to ascending unidentified steps. (c) The word is metaphorical for advances in rank or station. (d) A reference to the return

1. See B.D.B., p. 752; K.B., p. 548.

2. Barnes, The Psalms II, pp. 590ff.

from captivity. (e) A reference to going up from the surrounding countryside to Jerusalem (cf. Psalm cxxii 4). (f) A reference to an excellent song. Barnes favours (e) but Mowinckel discards this in favour of a closer relationship to the temple.<sup>1</sup> He maintains that though a strict translation should be "Songs of Ascension", it is fair to interpret this as "The songs of the Festal Processions". In favour of this he cites Psalm xlvii 6 and Psalm xxiv 3. The fact that  $\pi\lambda\gamma\gamma$  so frequently means "step" in the sense of steps leading somewhere tends to support Mowinckel. Kraus's theory is rather similar.<sup>2</sup> He believes that  $\pi\lambda\gamma$  signifies the last act of the pilgrimage, namely, the procession to the sanctuary. However, his rendering as Wallfahrtslied relates the title more to the general act of pilgrimage. It is probable that processions, if indeed they took place, would start not too far away from the temple, and undoubtedly steps would be encountered in an approach to the temple. Therefore, the translation "Song of Ascents" is given, with the proviso that this probably referred to processional ascents.

The use of  $\gamma\gamma\gamma$  in the title may not imply Davidic authorship. In any case, psalm titles are notoriously unreliable as a guide to the meaning or authorship of a psalm because of the uncertainty as to when they were appended. In the case of Psalm cxxii, two manuscripts, Targum, Jerome and a Greek codex omit the reference to David, although it

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1. Mowinckel, P.I.W. II, pp. 208-9.

2. Kraus, Psalmen I, Introduction pp. xx-xxii.

appears in Aquila, Symmachus other Greek codices. Delitzsch opines that if the psalm is Davidic it must belong to the time of Absalom's persecution. Delitzsch himself, however, does not accept this.<sup>1</sup> Eaton puts forward the theory that

יְיָ יִשְׁמַר may indicate that the psalm contains intercession for the dynasty,<sup>2</sup> but this is not a strongly supported hypothesis. Many psalms are attributed to David, and because of David's reputation as a psalmist, it is quite likely that some psalms were mistakenly taken to be his. Because of the historical perspective in v. 5 and because of some "late" variants in style, Davidic authorship is not of high probability.

#### Verses 1b-2

These verses represent an emotional recall of the arrival of a closely knit brotherhood of pilgrims inside the gates of Jerusalem and the joy they felt when they lingered in the sacred precincts of the city.

In v. 1 יָשַׁבְתִּי בְּשַׁעַר יְרוּשָׁלַם, in the perfect tense with a past reference, indicates that the original poet was recalling a vivid personal experience.

יָשַׁבְתִּי is surely cohortative in meaning if not in form.

יָשַׁבְתִּי without a preposition is an accusative of goal or aim.<sup>3</sup>

In v. 2 יָשַׁבְתִּי בְּשַׁעַר יְרוּשָׁלַם, a participle with auxiliary verb, has caused some speculation and produced a variety

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1. Delitzsch, The Psalms III, pp. 268-9.

2. Eaton, Psalms, p. 281.

3. G.K., 118c-h.

of translations. A.V. and P.B. translate as future, implying that the pilgrims are still looking forward to the entry. N.E.B.'s "are standing" implies that action has taken place between the two verses. LXX gives

ἐστῶτες ἡσυχῶν .

R.S.V. translates "have been standing", which is perhaps nearest the mark, for as Davidson states, "In order to express more distinctly the idea of duration, particularly in the past, the verb is sometimes used with the participle..."<sup>1</sup> However, in order to give the construction its full force, it is probably best to translate "have lingered".

### Verses 3-5.

These verses are a hymn in praise of Jerusalem, the holy city of the tribes of Israel and the legal and administrative centre of the "federation".

In v. 3 there is a problem of interpretation arising from the ambiguity of the second stichos.

אֵלֶּיךָ - וְיִבְרְכּוּךָ has traditionally been taken in either one of two possible ways. וְיִבְרְכּוּךָ is the third person feminine singular, pu'al perfect of יָבַרַךְ (unite, be joined, tie a magic knot). One way of taking the phrase is to accept it as a description of the compact nature of the city's construction. This is often associated with the restored city of Neh. ii 17, vii 4.<sup>2</sup> However, Davidic Jerusalem was a compactly built structure of terraces probably referred to as the Millo and an allusion to the

1. Davidson, Hebrew Syntax, p. 136; cf. G.K., 116r.

2. Kirkpatrick, The Psalms, p. 740.

Davidic city is more likely.<sup>1</sup> The second interpretation follows LXX's ἡς ἡ μετοχὴ αὐτῆς ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό (whose fellowship is together). Symmachus and Jerome follow this line, as does P.B. with, "...that is at unity with itself". The verb can be used metaphorically (cf. Psalm xciv 20). Eaton attempts to combine these two interpretations, maintaining that the city is described as compact and beautifully walled (cf. Psalm xlvi 12ff.) but that this is symbolic of tribal unity.<sup>2</sup>

A third possible interpretation is suggested by Gunkel<sup>3</sup> and followed by Weiser<sup>4</sup> (cf. B.H.S.). It is suggested that the pointing should be אֶל אֲשֶׁר אֵלֶיךָ מֵעַתָּה (where the assembly of the people meets). On balance, however, it is probably best to accept אֶל אֲשֶׁר אֵלֶיךָ מֵעַתָּה as in M.T. and to agree with Eaton that the verb not only refers to the compact structure of the city, but that it also implies spiritual unity.

The close association of the law and religious obligation is illustrated by v. 4. The position of Jerusalem as the centre of a tribal confederation is idealized - idealized because there probably never was a time when this description was completely true, neither under David nor under Josiah. Perhaps Solomon's administrative districts were the nearest approach to the ideal. The fact that the statement is made so categorically supports the

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1. Kenyon, Royal Cities of the Old Testament, pp. 34-5.

2. Loc. cit.

3. Gunkel, Die Psalmen, pp. 541-44.

4. Weiser, The Psalms, pp. 750ff.



argument that the psalm is post-Deuteronomic. The use of the relative  $\omega$  in this and the previous verse also argues for a late date, but not necessarily post-Exilic, for the appearance of such stylistic changes into Hebrew cannot be dated with any accuracy.

$\gamma\lambda\gamma$  is probably an example of the use of a past tense with its effect continuing into the present as a habit or custom.<sup>1</sup>

What can it mean to say that this custom was  $\gamma\lambda\gamma$  for Israel? The word can mean "testimony" or "a monitory sign" or "a reminder".<sup>2</sup> It is used of the tablets of the Ten Words (Ex. xxxi 18), of the ark as containing the tablets (Ex. xxv 22) and of the tabernacle as containing the ark which contained the tablets (Ex. xxxviii 21). In Psalm xix 8, in parallel with  $\gamma\lambda\gamma$ , the word is used of the law in general. The use of the word which best illuminates its meaning in this psalm is in Psalm lxxxi 2-4 5-6 where a feast day (Tabernacles?) is described as a statute ( $\gamma\lambda\gamma$ ) for Israel and a decree ( $\gamma\lambda\gamma$ ) for Joseph. It is probably fair to conclude, therefore, that the verse under discussion refers to the legal requirement that all males should present themselves before the Lord three times in the year at the three main festivals (cf. Ex. xxxiii 17, xxxiv 23, Deut. xvi 16; see also on Psalm cxxxii 12).

The purpose of this pilgrimage is to give thanks to the name of the Lord. Eaton's interpretation of  $\gamma\lambda\gamma$

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1. See G.K., 106g.

2. See B.D.B., p. 730; K.B., p. 683.

is that it refers to Jerusalem, decreed as a centre for Israel to encounter the Lord's name.<sup>1</sup> If by this he means that it applies to the legal requirement of the covenant that men should "go up" to Jerusalem to give due worship and reverence to God, then his statement is accurate. But the emphasis of אָפּגאָי seems to be on the "going up" rather than on the place of worship, which could in earlier times have been another centre.

Before v. 5 can be analysed there are two problems to be solved. (a) שִׁיבֵנוּ, a qal verb, does not readily make sense. R.S.V. and N.E.B. both translate "be set", but this is not the normal meaning of the qal. B.D.B. explains the construction as an example of metonymy (i.e. "thrones" meaning "judges" sat).<sup>2</sup> This explanation is not at all convincing. (b) "Thrones" (plural) is unique in such a context and does not accord with the fact that the Davidic throne was a single throne. The plural is used only in Is. xiv 9 in a description of the kings of the nations arising from Sheol. It is true that the plural is used in the Aramaic of Daniel vii 9 where, in fact, only the Ancient of Days takes his seat. The other seats could be for the saints, but in any case Daniel is so late that it was no doubt influenced by the legal system of the day, in which it would be customary for a tribunal of judges to sit.

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1. Eaton, Psalms, p. 281.

2. B.D.B., p. 442.

The verb is better changed to  $\text{וַיָּשִׁיבֵם}$ , moving the  $\text{ו}$  from  $\text{וַיָּשִׁיבֵם}$  and assuming that waw has been mistaken for yôdh. This, the third person plural, hiph'il perfect of  $\text{שָׁבַע}$ , is used as in 1 Kings xxi 10 to mean "they placed", the subject of the verb referring to tribes in their act of confederation, "placing" a throne in Jerusalem.

With regard to "thrones", most commentators explain the plural as a reference either to a tribunal of judges, to princes helping the king in his legal responsibilities,<sup>1</sup> or to judges in the post-Exilic period.<sup>2</sup> There is no doubt that the king had a juridical function, as 1 Kings iii 16ff. illustrates. Also, as Kraus notes, Solomon made the Hall of the Throne where he was to pronounce judgment (cf. 1 Kings vii 7). Kraus argues that the amphictyonic system was continued during the monarchy,<sup>3</sup> the elders judging in "the gate" as previously and the king acting as a court of appeal in difficult cases.<sup>4</sup> However, Kraus does not adequately explain why the word "thrones" is in the plural. There is no evidence that the king's family assisted him in his function as judge. Indeed, Absalom's efforts to influence the king's judgments rather indicate the contrary (cf. 2 Sam. xv 2). The reference to "those who judge" in Is. xxviii 6 cannot certainly be related to this verse. If the reference of "thrones for judgment" is to God (cf. Psalms ix 5 and xxix 10), then a singular throne is

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1. Delitzsch, The Psalms III, pp. 270-1.

2. Kirkpatrick, The Psalms, p. 740.

3. Kraus, Psalmen II, pp. 838-42.

4. See de Vaux, Ancient Israel, p. 152.

even more desirable. In fact, the parallel "thrones for the house of David" argues that the preceding thrones are also Davidic, but a single throne is required by logic and by custom. The reading of the Qumran scrolls in the first of the two instances is  $\text{מִן הַכִּסֵּי}$  and this seems to suggest that a singular was original.

The above arguments urge strongly the following arrangement of the text:

$\text{וַיֵּשְׁבּוּ בְּיִשְׁרָאֵל מִן הַכִּסֵּי וַיֵּשְׁבּוּ בְּיִשְׁרָאֵל מִן הַכִּסֵּי$

translating, "... (for there they have placed) a throne, a sign of judgment, a throne, a sign of the house of David". A corruption of the above to M.T. could easily have taken place by audio-visual error. It is possible that the third stichos of the verse was originally a marginal comment to explain that the "throne of judgment" was that of the house of David.

The tribes, then, "go up" according to custom and law to the central city of the confederation where they had placed, in the time of David, the royal throne, a symbol both of judgment and of the succession of the dynasty.

### Verses 6-9

This section constitutes an exhortation to pray for the  $\text{יְרוּשָׁלַיִם}$  of Jerusalem.

Verse 6 contains remarkable examples of alliteration and paranomasia. The possible connection of  $\text{יְרוּשָׁלַיִם}$  with the name of Jerusalem has already been discussed (cf. on Psalm lxxvi 3).

$\text{שְׁאַל}$  strictly means "enquire". Thus, the phrase

here is reminiscent of Jeremiah xv 5: "O Jerusalem ...

...who will turn aside to ask about your welfare?"

(  $\square \dot{\iota} \dot{\lambda} \psi \dot{\iota}$  ). On the other hand, the verb here could mean "pray for", as it is sometimes used of enquiries to the deity<sup>1</sup> (cf. Josh. ix 14). In the context of worship the latter meaning is preferable, but there could be a deliberate pun.

$\square \dot{\iota} \dot{\lambda} \psi$  has often been translated as "peace". This is certainly one aspect of the meaning but it does not exhaust the resources of the word. It has a comprehensive selection of meanings including, "prosperity, welfare, salvation, completeness, safety, security".<sup>2</sup> In Weiser's view the theme of the whole psalm is salvation; consequently he translates this word as "salvation".<sup>3</sup> However, the theme of the psalm is rather related to the security of Zion-Jerusalem as God's dwelling and prayer for God's continued presence and blessing there, which includes the wish for the welfare and prosperity of the city and its people.

It is worth noting that when the word  $\epsilon\iota\rho\acute{\eta}\nu\eta$  is used of Jerusalem in the New Testament, all the various shades of meaning ought to be carried over from  $\square \dot{\iota} \dot{\lambda} \psi$ . LXX translates here  $\tau\acute{\alpha} \epsilon\iota\varsigma \epsilon\iota\rho\acute{\eta}\nu\eta\upsilon$  (cf.  $\tau\acute{\alpha} \pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma \epsilon\iota\rho\acute{\eta}\nu\eta\upsilon$  in Luke xix 2).

$\dot{\iota} \dot{\lambda} \psi$  (LXX:  $\kappa\alpha\iota \epsilon\upsilon\theta\eta\nu\acute{\iota}\alpha \tau\omicron\iota\varsigma \acute{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\pi\omega\sigma\acute{\iota} \sigma\epsilon$  ), from the verb  $\dot{\iota} \dot{\lambda} \psi$  (=  $\pi \dot{\iota} \dot{\lambda} \psi$  ), meaning "be quiet, be at ease, prosper", supports the translation of  $\square \dot{\iota} \dot{\lambda} \psi$  as

1. See B.D.B., pp. 981-2.

2. Ibid., pp. 1022-3.

3. Weiser, The Psalms, p. 751.

"welfare" or "prosperity". The welfare of the city is inseparable from the welfare of those who worship there and it almost goes without saying that the king's intermediary status was vital for the  $\text{לְשִׁמְךָ}$  of both city and people (cf. on Psalm cxxxii 11-18).

$\text{לְשִׁמְךָ}$  refers to those who love Jerusalem and all it stands for. There is manuscript support for reading this as  $\text{לְשִׁמְךָ}$ , translating, "...may your tents prosper". But the antonym in Psalm cxxix 5, which asks that all who hate Zion should be put to shame, strongly supports the acceptance of  $\text{לְשִׁמְךָ}$ .

Oesterley notes the possible connection between prayers for welfare and prosperity with the Feast of Tabernacles.<sup>1</sup> Certainly, a good harvest would help to answer the psalmist's prayer, so a connection of the psalm with the main feast of the agricultural year is probable.

In v. 7 the appeal for the prosperity and security of the city is repeated.  $\text{לְשִׁמְךָ}$  and  $\text{בְּאַרְמֹנֶיךָ}$  are mentioned to represent the whole city as in Psalm xlvi 14.

$\text{לְשִׁמְךָ}$  seems to have been understood as  $\text{לְשִׁמְךָ}$  by LXX ( $\epsilon\nu\tau\eta\ \delta\omicron\nu\nu\acute{\alpha}\mu\epsilon\iota\ \sigma\omicron\upsilon$ ), but the parallelism supports the former. (See further on Psalm xlvi 14.)

In v. 8 it is indicated that the "individual" represented in the psalm will pray for the  $\text{לְשִׁמְךָ}$  of Jerusalem for the sake of the brotherhood and fellowship he has found there.

$\text{אֲנִי־בְרִיךְ}$  is thus taken as an emphatic statement

1. Oesterley, The Psalms II, pp. 504-7.

of intent rather than as a cohortative. The particle  $\text{אֲל}$  supports such an interpretation.<sup>1</sup>

Not only for the sake of the brotherhood, but also in v. 9 for the sake of the house of the Lord, the individual will seek the good of Jerusalem. In other words, the fellowship is experienced in worship in God's house and thus ultimately depends on God's grace.

It is noteworthy that Jeremiah invites the exiles to seek the welfare (  $\text{טוֹבָה וְשָׁלוֹם}$  ) of Babylon while they are in exile there (cf. Jer. xxix 7). After the dogma of Zion's inviolability had been shattered in 587 B.C., when the theological "necessity" of God's presence in Zion had disappeared, the continuation of God's presence with the people had to be otherwise explained.

### General comments

Although Zion as such is not mentioned in this psalm, it belongs firmly to the category of Zion hymns; at the same time it has some of the characteristics of the pilgrim song.<sup>2</sup> It also has affinities with that part of Psalm lxxxvii which praises Jerusalem as the central sanctuary. Like Psalm cxxxii and most other Songs of Ascents it is part of the so called Great Hallel (psalms cxx-cxxxvi) which Eaton classifies as a chain of prayer for festal worship.<sup>3</sup>

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1. G.K. 107b.

2. Kraus, Psalmen II, pp. 838-42.

3. Eaton, Psalms, p. 281.







use of וְ as a relative, together with the use of וְ as an auxiliary with participle, commentators like Kirkpatrick,<sup>1</sup> Delitzsch<sup>2</sup> and Mowinckel,<sup>3</sup> have dated the psalm as post-Exilic in the time of Nehemiah. As far as the phrasing of v. 3 is concerned, it has already been shown that this is probably not a description of the restored city. As to the mannerisms of a "late" style, there is no reason why they should not have been in use in the century before the Exile, though their use at a very early time would seem unlikely. On the other hand, there is some evidence that there was an early use of this form of the relative in northern areas.<sup>4</sup> At any rate, the traditional arguments are not at all decisive in any attempt to find the psalm's date and Sitz im Leben.

Gunkel shows that the psalm has probably been subject to the influence of the Deuteronomic legislation<sup>5</sup> and Oesterley agrees with this analysis.<sup>6</sup> The psalm may, indeed, have been written as part of Josiah's reform. However, Weiser argues that in view of Jeroboam's policy as described in 1 Kings xii 27ff., a date earlier than Josiah is possible.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Kraus criticizes the notion of Deuteronomic influence, maintaining that a Davidic date is

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1. Kirkpatrick, The Psalms, pp. 738-9.

2. Delitzsch, The Psalms III, pp. 268-9.

3. Mowinckel, P.I.W. II, p. 98.

4. See B.D.B., p. 979.

5. Gunkel, Die Psalmen, pp. 541-44.

6. Oesterley, The Psalms II, pp. 504-7.

7. Weiser, The Psalms, p. 750.

the only one in accord with the facts of vv. 4-5.<sup>1</sup> These arguments are reasonable, for it must be remembered that the description of a confederation of tribes faithful to Jerusalem and the crown could only have applied literally, if it applied at all, during the reigns of David and Solomon. The historical perspective of v. 5, however, seems to suggest a somewhat later date than the period of David and Solomon. On balance, it seems probable that the psalm was written for use by pilgrims in the eighth or seventh centuries B.C., with a preference for the latter because of the Deuteronomic ideas concerning centralization current at the time.

The logical corollary of this conclusion is that Jerusalem must have been idealized as the centre for a united Israel which did not, in fact, exist. This is not surprising. It has already been shown with regard to Psalm lxxxvii that the holy city was also regarded as the ideal centre of the world (cf. also on Psalm xlvi 3). Even so, it is probably true to say that every Jew throughout the history of the people has regarded himself as a member by descent of one of the twelve tribes; so there is a sense in which the picture of Jerusalem as the centre of a confederacy was factually true. Further, as the narrative of the Book of Kings shows, the "break away" kingdom of the north was regarded as illegal. As additional support for dating the psalm at the time of Josiah, it should be noted that it was part of his policy to re-unite the two kingdoms, or at least their geographical

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1. Kraus, Psalmen II, pp. 838-42.

equivalents. This psalm could be a reflection of that policy.

The Sitz im Leben of the psalm was probably the Feast of Tabernacles. The emphasis on prayer for the welfare and prosperity of the city certainly supports a connection with an autumn thanksgiving festival.

#### Aspects of the Zion concept presented in the psalm.

1. Zion-Jerusalem was loved and idealized by pilgrims (vv. 1b-2).
2. Zion-Jerusalem is praised as a united city in the dual sense of physical compactness and of spiritual fellowship (vv. 3-4).
3. Zion-Jerusalem is pictured as a centre for worship and as the court of appeal for judgment for the whole of Israel (vv. 3-5).
4. The welfare of Zion-Jerusalem was symbolic for the welfare of the whole of Israel (vv. 6-9).
5. The Davidic throne placed in Zion-Jerusalem was associated with the city itself in making a double symbol of unity in Israel (v. 5).

#### Concluding comment on the Zion concept in Psalm cxxii.

Zion-Jerusalem is the dream city of every Israelite. Throughout the year at home, however far away he lives, he longs to return to the city again, to visit the temple, to linger lovingly within the precincts of the city, to experience once more the feeling of brotherhood and fellowship which the city symbolizes for him and for all

Israelites.

The very physical structure of the city recalls for the pilgrim the binding and compact nature of the Israelite tribal brotherhood. The brethren of the covenant are scattered even more widely than the former ideal tribal areas would indicate, but yet all are bound as one by the strength of the Zion symbol. This oneness is actualized at those times when all male Israelites who are able present themselves at the important festivals, but even during the long months away from Zion its unifying influence is felt.

In addition to Zion, the Davidic throne acts as a unifying symbol. The king, who is Yahweh's representative ruling in Zion, is the final judge of all dispute in Israel. Loyalty to the king is second only to loyalty to Yahweh himself. It is through the king that blessings come to the nation.

All Israelites must pray for the prosperity of Jerusalem. When Zion's towers are secure the nation is secure; when Zion is prosperous every Israelite home will partake of this prosperity.

The psalm supremely illustrates the importance of the Davidic kingship, of the temple worship on Zion and of the city as an entity as factors in promoting a national consciousness which perceives Israel as God's united people.

Psalm cxxxii

1. A song of ascents.

Remember David, O Lord,  
and his concern towards you,

2. how he swore to the Lord  
and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob:
3. "I will not enter my house,  
nor go up to my bed;
4. I will not allow sleep to my eyes,  
nor drowsiness to my eyelids;
5. until I find a place for the Lord,  
a dwelling for the Mighty One of Jacob".

6. Surely, we heard the oxen leading on?  
Surely, we found the ark in the field he appointed?
7. Let us proceed to his dwelling place!  
Let us pay homage before his footstool!

8. Rise up, O Lord, and go to your settled place,  
you and the ark of your might.
9. Let your priests be invested with righteousness;  
let your loyal followers shout for joy.
10. For the sake of David your servant,  
do not withdraw your grace from your anointed king.

11. The Lord swore to David,  
a trustworthy oath which he will not retract:  
"A scion of your line

- I will set on your throne.
12. If your sons preserve my covenant  
and this my testimony which I shall teach them,  
then their sons, without end,  
shall sit on your throne".
13. Surely the Lord has chosen Zion;  
he has decreed it for his dwelling:
14. "This is my settled place for all time;  
here I will stay, for I have desired it.
15. I will indeed bless her sustenance;  
I will satisfy her destitute with bread.
16. Her priests I will invest with salvation;  
and her loyal followers will indeed shout for joy".
17. There I will cause a horn to issue forth for David;  
I have pre-ordained a lamp for my anointed king.
18. His enemies I will invest with shame,  
but upon himself his crown shall shed a shining glory.

#### Verse 1a. Title

The designation שִׁיר הַמַּצְלִיחַ has been fully  
discussed in relation to Psalm cxxii.

#### Verses 1b-5

These verses are a petition to God to remember David's  
work in striving to find a suitable dwelling place for "the  
Mighty One of Jacob".

The remainder of the section depends grammatically on v. 1b. The most difficult word is  $\text{יִתְיַיֵּץ}$ . As it stands this is the infinitive construct pu'al of  $\text{יָצַץ}$ , uniquely with a suffix. This verb has a number of meanings as follows: (a) answer (b) be busy with (c) be afflicted (d) sing.<sup>1</sup> Most commonly (c) has been accepted, as by N.E.B. and R.S.V. Scholars who follow this line of interpretation explain the meaning in various ways. Weiser believes it may concern conflicts over sanctuaries as in 1 Kings xii 6.<sup>2</sup> Kirkpatrick quotes 1 Chron. xxii 14: "With great pains I have provided for the house of the Lord".<sup>3</sup> Gunkel<sup>4</sup> and Oesterley<sup>5</sup> see this affliction in the technical sense of fasting and self-castigation as in Lev. xxiii 29. Other commentators prefer to follow Syriac and LXX (  $\tau\eta\varsigma \pi\rho\alpha\upsilon\tau\eta\tau\omicron\varsigma \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$  ) emending the text to  $\text{יִתְיַיֵּץ}$  (his humility).<sup>6</sup> Yet another meaning is proposed by Hillers who accepts the pointing  $\text{יִתְיַיֵּץ}$  but, on the basis of inscriptions, gives the meaning as "piety".<sup>7</sup> What seems to have escaped most scholars is the peculiar construction of this sentence,  $\text{וְיָצַץ}$  being followed by  $\text{בְּ}$  and then by  $\text{יָצַץ}$  in the second stichos. However, if the latter is written  $\text{יִתְיַיֵּץ} \text{ וְיָצַץ}$

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1. See B.D.B., pp. 772-7; K.B., pp. 718-20.

2. Weiser, The Psalms, pp. 778-80.

3. Kirkpatrick, The Psalms, pp. 762-5.

4. Gunkel, Die Psalmen, pp. 564-9.

5. Oesterley, The Psalms II, pp. 529-31.

6. Johnson, S.K., p. 20.

7. Hillers, C.B.Q., XXX 1968, pp. 48-55.

the syntax is more correct. Further, in both stichoi  
 ה (ה) could then be either the sign of the accusative<sup>1</sup> or  
 could mean "concerning". The second person suffix would  
 accord with the imperative. עֲמַל could mean "work"  
 as in Eccles. i 3. The preposition אֶל could be  
 accepted in the sense of "dealing with someone", or if it  
 were deemed theologically undesirable to hint at synergism  
 it could mean "towards" (cf. Is. lxvi 14, Psalm lxvii 2).  
 This leads to two possible translations: (a) his dealings  
 with you (b) his concern towards you. The latter seems  
 more apt.

Kirkpatrick perceives in this appeal to God through  
 David an earlier version of the doctrine of merit as pro-  
 pounded in Pirke Aboth<sup>2</sup> (cf. Deut. ix 27, Lev. xxvi 42).

In v. 2, the oath of David seems to record a  
 tradition which does not appear in the histories. However,  
 2 Sam. vii 2 contains an affirmation by David on the  
 subject of building a house for God, if not an actual  
 oath.

לְאַבִּיר יֵצֵא, according to Weiser, represents  
 a northern tradition joined to the Jerusalem tradition.<sup>3</sup>  
 This may be so, but on the other hand it would seem natural  
 for the Jacob tradition to be remembered in the south in  
 any case. On the basis of 1 Kings xii 28-9 Oesterley  
 believes the original pointing was אֶבֶר (bull) and that

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1. See B.D.B., p. 512.

2. Loc. cit.

3. Loc. cit.



this was later changed in Gen. xlix and elsewhere for theological reasons.<sup>1</sup> This theory, however, seems unnecessarily to reduce the patriarchal God's status and to denigrate the insight of patriarchal tradition. (See also the note on Psalm xlvii 8 for  $\text{דָּבָר}$  as a possible divine name.)

Oesterley believes v. 3 to contain more than poetic fancy and postulates another source.<sup>2</sup> In view of the decisive statements about an oath this may well be the case, so long as the poetry is not presented as a statement of David's ipsissima verba! Gunkel<sup>3</sup> and Barnes<sup>4</sup> propose that the verse refers to abstinence from the intercourse of marriage. The story of Uriah in 2 Sam. xi 9ff. gives this theory some support. However, the phrasing of the psalm would imply a much longer period of abstinence, which makes the theory less credible.

Verse 4, a continuation of the condition of the oath, surely not to be taken literally, is repeated with variations in Prov. vi 4. This may indicate that both verses recall a common proverbial expression.

$\text{דָּבָר}$  (in Prov. vi 4  $\text{דָּבָר}$ ), has caused difficulty because of the apparent discarding of a pretonic vowel. Delitzsch believes this to be a lengthened ground form of

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1. Loc. cit.

2. Loc. cit.

3. Loc. cit.

4. Barnes, The Psalms II, pp. 612-3.

נִינִשׁ,<sup>1</sup> while Briggs suggests that it is either an apocoped form of נִינִשׁ or short for a fuller feminine form, נִינִשׁ.<sup>2</sup> On the whole, it seems simpler to point it as a plural absolute ( נִינִשׁ ) as in Prov. vi 10. In any case, because of the Proverbs parallel, the meaning is indisputable. The addition by Theodotion and LXX can safely be ignored.

The apodosis of the oath, contained in v. 5, claims David's intention to find a dwelling place for God. This, of course, sets the stage for the reminiscence concerning the ark and its rightful resting place.

### Verses 6-7

This short section appertains to the history of the ark. There is a general consensus of opinion that these and the following verses were the vocal accompaniment to a ceremony or procession. Mowinckel takes the view that the reigning king played the part of David in a dramatic performance of the search for the ark.<sup>3</sup> One important piece of evidence for this theory is the parallel ceremony in Babylon where the king and priests took part in a ceremonial search for a lost, dead or imprisoned God. However, Mowinckel insists that the recollection here is historical even if there are mythical traces. Eaton, believing that a chorus of voices at this point told how the ark was found, claims that this was a processional

1. Delitzsch, The Psalms III, pp. 305-8.

2. Briggs and Briggs, The Book of Psalms II, p. 473.

3. Mowinckel, P.I.W. I, p. 176.

ascent to the temple.<sup>1</sup> (See further in the concluding section on this psalm.) At any rate, it seems feasible that the words were spoken by a priest or by a chorus of voices on some cultic occasion. The evidence for a procession is strong, especially if Psalm cxxxii is taken together with the related Psalms xxiv and lxviii.

However, there is a crucial problem as to what the text actually does say in v. 6. What has been heard and where? What has been found and where? To answer these questions it is necessary to examine the meanings of

בְּאֶפְרַתָּה and בְּשִׁלֹּה and to decide the reference of the suffix(es).

בְּאֶפְרַתָּה has been interpreted in a number of different ways. First of all, as Gunkel believes, it could refer to Bethlehem<sup>2</sup> (cf. Gen. xxxv 16, 19, xlvi 7; Ruth iv 11; Mic. v 1). In this case it could mean that David first heard of the ark's existence there. Secondly, on the basis of 1 Chron. ii 50 which reads, "The sons of Hur the first born of Ephrathah: Shobal the father of Kiriath-jearim...", it is possible to assert that Ephrathah in this verse refers to Kiriath-jearim, in which case the connection with the ark is obvious (cf. 1 Sam. vi). Thirdly, in 1 Sam. i, Elkanah's father was Zuph, an Ephraimite (cf. בְּזִפְתָּה 1 Sam. xvii 12 and Ruth i 2). Therefore, it is possible to say that Ephrathah refers to Shiloh where the ark was kept earlier. Fourthly, it could be translated

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1. Eaton, Psalms, pp. 291-2.

2. Gunkel, Die Psalmen, pp. 564-9.

as "fertile plains" or "cornfields", thus giving a natural parallel to "fields of the forest".<sup>1</sup>

רֶמֶל בְּיָדָיִם has also been variously interpreted. First of all, because the translation could be "field of the forest" and because Kiriath-jearim means "city of forests", it could be a poetic name for Kiriath-jearim (cf. 1 Sam. vii 1ff., 2 Sam. vi 2ff.). Delitzsch thus makes an analogy with the fields of Zoan in Psalm lxxviii 12.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, it is possible with Johnson to emend to רֶמֶל בְּיָדָיִם,<sup>3</sup> the argument then being that David's original name was Elhanan ben Jair (2 Sam. xxi 19) and that both names refer to Bethlehem. The reference of the verse is then to David's humility in the preceding lines. Thirdly, if the translation is "field of the forest" the reference could be to Lebanon, the inference then being that the two descriptions represent a call to all people from north and south to come to worship.<sup>4</sup>

With regard to the suffixes, three main possibilities have been put forward. First of all, both could refer to the ark, which is feminine in 1 Sam. iv 17 and 2 Chron. viii 11. Secondly, both could refer to God, but in this case the suffixes are the wrong gender, (but cf. Vulgate's "him"). Thirdly, they could be a general reference, feminine for neuter, to the foregoing lines. This is feasible for the first stichos but less than adequate for the second.

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1. See Kirkpatrick, The Psalms, pp. 765-6; Delitzsch, The Psalms III, pp. 308-11.

2. Loc. cit.

3. Johnson, S.K., p. 21.

4. Briggs and Briggs, The Psalms II, p. 470, quote this view but do not support it.

It can be seen, then, that the main problem is to associate the two places (or translations) in a meaningful way. If both, indeed, referred to Kiriath-jearim, then the connection with the ark and the succeeding verses would be obvious. If both referred to Bethlehem, at least consistency would be preserved. If one referred to Shiloh and the other to Kiriath-jearim, some measure of logical connection would be apparent. Unfortunately, if the various interpretations are combined in every possible permutation, there is no solution which can be claimed to be firmly convincing, for most of the attempts to relate the two stichoi strain either the Hebrew or the imagination. (Both R.S.V. and N.E.B. transliterate "Ephrathah" and "Jaar".)

It is proposed here to offer a completely different solution. The basis of this is a reading of the text as follows:

וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶת הַקוֹל וַיֵּצֵאוּ אֶת הָאֹרֶן מִבֵּית יְהוֹשֻׁעַ  
 וַיֵּצֵאוּ אֶת הָאֹרֶן מִבֵּית יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וַיֵּצֵאוּ אֶת הָאֹרֶן מִבֵּית יְהוֹשֻׁעַ

It will be observed that the only consonantal change is rêsh to dāleth in וַיֵּצֵאוּ. The translation reads:

"Surely we heard the oxen leading on?"

Surely we found the ark in the field he appointed?"

It is assumed that the reference is to the story of the return of the ark in 1 Sam. vi. The word וַיֵּצֵאוּ is used (cf. vv. 10-12). In v. 14: "The cart came (וַיָּבֹאוּ) to the field (וַיֵּצֵאוּ) of Joshua". Further, in v. 18 the field was obviously remembered as the scene of a vital event in Israel's history, probably more important than what happened at Kiriath-jearim.

יִי is used in a number of psalms (cf. li 7-8).

The interrogative יִי can be used to express the conviction that the contents of a statement are well known to the hearer<sup>1</sup> (cf. Gen. iii 11). יִי at the beginning serves both stichoi and emphasizes the "surely" implicit in the interrogative.

הִיִּי, the infinitive absolute hiph'il of הִיִּי, is used in Hag. i 6 and can be used in the sense "lead on" or "bring on". The infinitive absolute can be used as object or subject.<sup>2</sup>

The suffix in the second stichos refers to the ark and for the sake of clarity is translated "ark".

וְיִי הִיִּי means "the field God appointed" for the discovery of the ark. It is important to remember in this connection that God's presence was associated closely with the ark and even equated with it. (See on v. 8.) This, then, appears as a manifestation of the divine will.

If the interrogative construction is disliked, the reading could be יִיִּי as before; the second יִי interrogative could return to יִיִּי, and by assuming haplography the word could be יִיִּיִּי = their (the Philistines') oxen". Further, if for the sake of balance it was thought the first suffix ought to remain with יִיִּי, then the form of הִיִּי could be הִיִּי (infinitive construct), translating:

"Surely, we heard it coming with their oxen!"

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1. G.K., 150e.

2. G.K., 113a-g.

We found the ark in the field he appointed".

The verse is now meaningfully related to the appeal for those present to go to God's dwelling place. This could simply be an imaginative, that is to say literary, reconstruction of the historical events in 1 Sam. vi and 2 Sam. vi, or possibly a procession could start, signalled by this reading, from a field near the temple which was supposed to represent the field of Joshua. It is probable that the events of Kiriath-jearim were also included, as well as other historical events related to the ark, in a foreshortened version. It may be that vv. 6-7 are a quotation from an older song about the ark.

In v. 7, the worshippers are invited to go with the ark to the temple, and to worship there before God's footstool. It is sufficient to refer to 2 Sam. vi 2 and 1 Chron. xxviii 2 to discover that the "footstool" could be the ark. It is true that in Is. lxvi 1 the earth is God's footstool, and in Is. lx 13, the temple (cf. Is. vi 1ff.). However, the balance of probability in this case is with the ark.

### Verses 8-10

In this section an appeal is made to God to arise and go to his permanent resting place, presumably the temple on Mount Zion. Also an appeal is made for (or by) the priests that they should be righteous and for the people devoted to God that they should be able to express their joy. Then finally, an appeal is made on behalf of the reigning king that God's favour should remain with him, for



the sake of his ancestor David. These verses are "quoted" in 2 Chron. vi 41-2. It is possible that both authors were relying on an older song.

In v. 8, there seem to be affinities with the battle-cry of Numbers x 35, but the purpose of the exclamation here seems different, unlike Psalm lxviii 1 which bears more similarity to the Numbers text. However, if the two psalms are part of a series recalling historical events, it could be that part of Psalm lxviii refers back to famous battles, whereas, as has been shown, Psalm cxxxii commemorates the recovery of the ark and its placing in the Jerusalem sanctuary. "Let God arise!", in this verse then, probably refers to the progress of the ark from Bethshemesh and Kiriath-jearim which, in the cult, have been telescoped together. Johnson,<sup>1</sup> Eaton<sup>2</sup> and Mowinckel<sup>3</sup> argue for a procession in which the ark was borne into the temple. The wording of this verse certainly supports such an argument. Weiser takes a different view,<sup>4</sup> arguing that in v. 7 the ark is to be regarded as already in the temple. The themes presented are not the background to a processional but a theophany. A similar view is that of Hillers, who argues from the Ugaritic that  $\text{?}$  in this verse means "from".<sup>5</sup> Consequently, this, like Num. x 35, is an appeal for God to arise for action, in this case to intervene on the king's behalf. On balance, however, the evidence of

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1. Johnson, S.K., p. 19.

2. Eaton, Psalms, pp. 291-2.

3. Mowinckel, P.I.W. I, pp. 6, 76.

4. Weiser, The Psalms, p. 781.

5. Hillers, C.B.Q., XXX 1968, pp. 48-55.



this psalm, added to that of Psalms xxiv and lxviii, supports the procession theory.

The ark itself is mentioned only here in the psalms. It is described fully in Ex. xxxvii. In early Israel, as is shown in Num. x (cf. Josh. vi 6-7, 1 Sam. iv 3-8), the ark not only represented God's presence but also acted as a symbol of God's might in war. Johnson, indeed, argues that the ark was regarded as an extension of the divine personality.<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. iv 5-8 seems to support this view (cf. 1 Sam. vi 20), as does the wording here. Barnes, however, would argue that "ark of your strength" is equivalent to "your strong ark", thus changing the emphasis.<sup>2</sup> At any rate, there is sufficient ambiguity in the relationship between the symbol and its reference (cf. the dispute about the Real Presence in the Eucharist) to make Johnson's theory a possibility rather than a probability. It is interesting to note with Oesterley that the mention of the ark in this psalm may date it before the Exile<sup>3</sup> (cf. Jer. iii 16, Ezra i 7-11).

In v. 9 the first stichos appeals to God to clothe his priests with righteousness. In the New Testament white, priestly garments are a symbol of purity (cf. Rev. xix 8). In Zech. iii 3ff. the story about Joshua may represent a ceremonial dressing for the high priest coming into office. While the reference here may simply be

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1. Johnson, T.O.T.M., pp. 19ff.

2. Barnes, The Psalms II, p. 614.

3. Oesterley, The Psalms II, p. 532.

metaphorical, it is possible that the metaphor arose from actual custom. Kraus argues that the phrase indicates that the priests were entrusted with a salvation oracle,<sup>1</sup> that they dispensed  $\text{p}7\text{š}$  in Yahweh's name. This may be true in a general sense but Kraus seems to be reading more into the phrase than is readily apparent. Oesterley argues that  $\text{p}7\text{š}$  here refers to the "correct" or "right" clothing, but this seems to be rather a prosaic interpretation of poetic language.<sup>2</sup> The best translation is probably "righteousness" as defined in the comments on Psalm xlviii 11.

The  $\text{q}77\text{q}7$  are probably "the people devoted to God". "Saints" (R.S.V.) is not a very good translation. It probably arose from LXX's  $\text{ἁγιοί}$  and Vulgate's "sanctus". The word appears twenty five times in the psalter. The related word  $\text{q}7\text{q}7$  has been discussed in relation to Psalm xlviii 10.  $\text{q}7\text{q}7$  may be used in the active sense of a person showing  $\text{q}7\text{q}7$  or in the passive sense of receiving  $\text{q}7\text{q}7$ . Here the word could be interpreted in either sense. Possibly the two senses are of necessity complementary. The problem is a version of the dispute between the theology of works and the theology of grace. In later Judaism  $\text{q}77\text{q}7$  became associated with keeping the law and as a result the group in the Maccabean period who were loyal to the law were called Hasidim.<sup>3</sup> The shout for joy may be a reference to the festival shout

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1. Kraus, Psalmen, 876-888.

2. Loc. cit.

3. See Kirkpatrick, The Psalms, pp. 95ff. and Appendix I; Snaith, D.I.O.T., under  $\text{q}7\text{q}7$ .

of Psalm xlvii 6, the  $\text{לְיָהוָה}$ , which gives further support to the procession theory.

In v. 10 there is intercession for the king which seems to have been a regular practice in the cult (cf. on Psalm lxxxiv 9).

### Verses 11-12

This section and the one following deal with the dual election of David and of Zion respectively.

These verses recall that God made a promise to David. As this is God's promise it will not be abrogated. However, the condition of the promise involves the human side of the covenant agreement; that is to say, the descendants of David will rule in Jerusalem if they keep the covenant statutes. Gunkel notes that this stipulation does not appear in connection with Nathan's prophecy in 2 Sam. vii, although it does appear in Solomon's prayer of consecration in 1 Kings viii 25 (cf. 1 Kings iii 14).<sup>1</sup>

Because of this theme of Davidic election, Mowinckel would relate the psalm to the enthronement festival in which the king, as Yahweh's representative, was annually made the recipient of Yahweh's covenant at the festival of the renewal of Yahweh's kingship.<sup>2</sup> Weiser, who sees the autumn festival rather as a covenant festival, perceives here a ritual act in which the covenant was renewed.<sup>3</sup> It

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1. Gunkel, Die Psalmen, pp. 564-9.

2. Mowinckel, H.T.C., p. 84, and *passim*.

3. Weiser, The Psalms, pp. 781-2.

is highly probable, as Johnson suggests, that there was a covenant ceremony at the king's coronation and quite possible that this was renewed annually.<sup>1</sup> Johnson believes that *h'ly* denotes "the testimony (-ies?)" = "the duties involved in accepting the covenant", in a concrete form. This would be similar to the injunction in Deut. vi 4ff. to bind the words of the Shema as a sign upon the hand, etc. The description of the coronation of the boy king Jehoash (2 Kings xi 12), in which the king received the testimony as he received the crown, certainly supports Johnson's contention (cf. 2 Chron. xxiii 11). The unusual singular suffix may indicate that the noun represents a singular object. Kraus rightly notes,<sup>2</sup> and this is confirmed by de Vaux,<sup>3</sup> that in any covenant agreement involving the king in Israel and his administration of the law, it is invariably God's law which is concerned.

It seems that there are points at which the themes of the royal psalms overlap with the themes of the Zion psalms, as here. It could be that the procession of the ark was followed in the temple by the celebration of Yahweh's kingship, the renewal of human kingship and the restating of the covenant, to which this reminder of the joint election of David and of Zion would be a suitable introduction.

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1. Johnson, S.K., pp. 23-4.

2. Loc. cit.

3. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, pp. 148-9.

### Verses 13-14

The election of Zion as the place on earth where God wills to reveal himself is here recapitulated. Weiser correctly notes that  $\gamma\eta\lambda$  implies that God alone decides where he is to appear<sup>1</sup> (cf. Deut. xii 5, 11, 14; 1 Chron. xxi 28- xxii 1; 2 Chron. vi 6).

The authority for claiming that God had specifically chosen Zion exists in the historical narrative, just as the authority for claiming God's promise to the Davidic house exists, though perhaps not quite so prominently. While it is true that David was forbidden to build a temple (2 Sam. vii 6), he nevertheless followed the word of God, as the Lord commanded, and built an altar on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite (cf. 2 Sam. xxiv 18-19; 1 Chron. xxi 28- xxii 1). Further, Solomon claims in 1 Kings v 5 that God had decreed that David's son would build a temple. The dual election of David's house and of Zion also appears in 1 Kings ix 3ff. The continued election of Zion, like the election of the dynasty, also depends on the kings keeping the commandments (cf. 1 Kings vi 11-13). It is made explicit that God's election of a specific place does not mean that God can be contained in a building: "Behold: heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!" (1 Kings viii 27). Moreover, God's true dwelling place is in heaven (1 Kings viii 10). The relationship between

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1. Loc. cit.

the heavenly dwelling place and Zion is surely intended to show that God is transcendent as well as immanent.

### Verses 15-18

In this section comes the answer to the earlier supplications. God is represented as renewing the blessing of the king, the priests and the people. This blessing will be made manifest in practical ways as well as spiritual ways: the people will be fed and enemies will be defeated.

In v. 15 it is promised that the people of Zion, especially the poor, will have more than enough to eat. The practical problems of this task are indicated in Uzziah's efforts to solve them (2 Chron. xxvi 10). Porter would be more specific and claims that there was an actual distribution of food to the poor and a banquet.<sup>1</sup> He relates this psalm, of course, to a coronation ceremony (cf. 2 Sam. xvi 18-19 and see further below). At any rate, the blessing of the king is closely related to the blessing of the people. The king was mediator of אֵלֶּיךָ to the whole of Israel.

In v. 16 there are similarities to v. 9, the main differences being the use of the first person in the first stichos and the substitution of וְאַתָּה for רַחֵם. These two words are used in parallel in Is. lxi 10 to describe the robes of the Lord's anointed. As Oesterley points

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1. Porter, J.T.S., V 1954, pp. 161-73.

out, וְשִׁמְךָ concerns welfare in a material sense as well as spiritual salvation<sup>1</sup> (cf. Deut. xviii 1-5).

In v. 17 there is reference again to the promise to the dynasty. The figure of the horn is used to describe a powerful king (Antiochus Epiphanes) in the Book of Daniel vii 7, 8, viii 5. It is usually the "branch" that "sprouts" in prophecies about the royal family (Is. xi 1, Zech. iii 8, iv 12). Here the "horn" symbol seems to have acquired this capacity. Quite often, of course, Christian scholars see such references as prophetic of Christ, but in the context of this psalm the reference is to the Davidic line. The lamp ( נֵר ) is also, probably, a reference to the continuation of the dynasty. This is especially clear in 1 Kings xi 36; "Yet to his son I will give one tribe, that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem..." (cf. 1 Kings xv 4, 2 Sam. xxi 17). Other possibilities are: (a) נֵר could refer to the king's function as judge and mentor of his people (cf. 1 Sam. viii 20, Prov. xx 8). (b) It could be a symbol for the prosperous life under God's guidance (cf. Psalm xxvii 1).

Porter counts this as another piece of evidence to support his coronation theory, for the lamp, apparently, played an important role in Egyptian coronations.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, (c), this could be a reference to an ever-burning lamp kept in the sanctuary to symbolize God's

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1. Oesterley, The Psalms II, p. 532.

2. Loc. cit.



presence with the king and the people.

In v. 18 is a final comment on what the promise to the king involves - glory to him and shame for his enemies. Expected victory in battle was part of the ideology of kingship (cf. Psalm lxxii 9).

The root meaning of  $\text{קִדְּשׁ}$  is "consecration" and the word here could have that meaning, or it could mean "crown" which, in fact, is more likely. As in Psalm lxxxix 40 this is a symbol of royal power, but the crown is also a symbol of the king's consecration as the servant of God. There may, indeed, be a suggestion in the phrase that the king was also regarded as a high priest. In Ex. xxix 6 "a holy crown" is placed on top of the high priest's turban. In Lev. xxi 12  $\text{קִדְּשׁ}$  refers to the consecration of the oil of the anointing of the high priest. Further, the verb  $\text{קִדְּשׁ}$  used here is cognate with the noun  $\text{קִדְּשׁ}$  which is used of the plate of gold (?) on the front of the high priest's mitre ( $\text{קִדְּשׁ}$ ) (cf. Lev. viii 9, Ex. xxviii 36).

### General comments

Psalm cxxxii has some of the characteristics of the royal psalm (Johnson) and also of the Zion psalm (Gunkel), but it could also be classified as a pilgrim song (Weiser) or as a processional liturgy. At any rate, for the purpose of this investigation it comes within the sphere of psalms closely related to Zion.

The metre is almost uniformly 3:3 with minor variations. Whether the form is structured in detail is



debatable. The simplest division is to see vv. 1-10 as supplication and vv. 11-18 as promise. Fretheim, however, perceives an a,b,a,b strophe pattern (vv. 1-5, 6-9, 10-12, 13-16) with vv. 17-18 as a summary and conclusion. He also argues for a detailed relationship between the strophes and points out some interesting inner relationships.<sup>1</sup> Whether the poet created such a structure intentionally is doubtful. On the whole, the simple division into two main parts is the most helpful way to look at the psalm.

As the discussion has shown, the main themes of the psalm are as follows: (a) An appeal to God on the basis of David's efforts to establish a sanctuary. (b) A historical reminiscence of the finding of the ark when it was returned by the Philistines. (c) An appeal to God to dwell with the ark in Zion and to bless the priests and people. (d) A recapitulation of the Davidic covenant and its requirements. (e) A summary of the implications of Zion's election. (f) A final promise by God to continue the dynasty of David and to promote its welfare.

The evidence for a procession as a dramatic background to the psalm is quite strong. Eaton classifies it with Psalms xxiv and lxviii, maintaining that all of these psalms were used in a processional ascent to the temple.<sup>2</sup> He sees the psalm as part of the autumn festival celebrations in which the sanctuary's beginnings were recalled and re-enacted. Gunkel agrees that there was a yearly

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1. Fretheim, J.B.L., LXXXVI 1967, pp. 289-300.

2. Eaton, Psalms, pp. 291-2.

celebration of the inauguration of the sanctuary.<sup>1</sup> Mowinckel enters into much more detailed discussion.<sup>2</sup> He maintains that there was a dramatically performed procession, that the reigning king played the part of David in a ritual search for the ark resembling the search for the god in Babylonian ritual, that this took place at the enthronement festival, that Psalms lxviii, cxxxii and xxiv were probably used in the procession in that order and that historical memories were recalled even though tinged with mythical overtones.

Over against this position, Weiser denies the existence of a procession.<sup>3</sup> He envisages that the psalm was used at an autumn covenant festival in a celebration of the dedication of the temple. This is a valid viewpoint but tends to ignore the textual evidence for a procession. Hillers similarly denies the possibility of a procession.<sup>4</sup> He prefers to see the psalm as epigraphic, which is to say that it was originally written on a stele for public reading. One hinge of Hillers' argument is his translation of  $\frac{1}{2}$  in v. 8 as "from". This is possible but does not accord with the general context. The other hinge is a comparison between the psalm and extant inscriptions of the period. This in itself, however, can only prove that the inscriptions and the psalm came from the same cultural background. Hillers' theory then, though

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1. Gunkel, Die Psalmen, pp. 564-9.

2. Mowinckel, P.I.W. I, pp. 6, 60, 72, 176.

3. Weiser, The Psalms, pp. 778-80.

4. Hillers, C.B.Q., XXX 1968, pp. 48-55.

of interest, is by no means proven.

Porter takes the view that the psalm is a cultic account, parallel to the historical account in 2 Sam. vi.<sup>1</sup> He sees both as recording the coronations of the kings in Jerusalem. Although he marshals some quite convincing evidence, his theory contains a fatal flaw. Why does the account in 2 Sam. vi so conceal its nature as an account of a coronation that it has to be searched out with great labour?

Kraus believes that there was a special "ark" source parts of which were inserted at various points in the Deuteronomic history.<sup>2</sup> This old story was the hieros logos of the Jerusalem sanctuary. Similarly, the basic story of Nathan's prophecy (2 Sam. vii) was enlarged and became the hieros logos for the Davidic kings as masters of the temple. These two themes, the Zion theme and the theme of Davidic kingship, were closely linked, as in this psalm. Further, arguing from the parallel sed festival in Egypt and from Akkadian and Sumerian parallels, he maintains that it is possible to speak of a royal Zion festival which probably took place as the opening ceremony of the feast of Tabernacles, on the first day. The purpose of this was to celebrate the inauguration of the central sanctuary of the twelve tribes. This Jerusalem festival stands in the great stream of Ancient Near-Eastern festivals which celebrate the foundation of the sanctuary and the continuation of the kingship. On the whole, this is a fairly

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1. Porter, J.T.S., V 1954, pp. 161-173.

2. Kraus, Psalmen II, pp. 879-883.

convincing view, although the parallels to the Egyptian festival must not be exaggerated. Moreover, although the themes of Zion's election and of David's election were indeed closely associated as in this psalm, it is perhaps going too far to define a royal Zion festival; it is probably more accurate to state that these themes were interwoven among others as part of the Biblically attested feast of Tabernacles.

It is perhaps Fretheim who has made the most revealing analysis of the psalm.<sup>1</sup> While his arguments about the form are not to be accepted without reservations, his comments about the general themes of the psalm are of great value. He sees the psalm as a liturgy recalling some formative events in Israel's history. These events are incorporated into one tradition where a series of indicators point towards the goal of that history, namely, Jerusalem. There is a move in thought from the outside of the temple to its interior. This represents the culmination of the movement of the chosen people with Yahweh, as symbolized by the ark, at their head.

Such a view of the psalm's essential nature is convincing, and if it is allied to Mowinckel's view that it was also a liturgy for a procession used at the autumn festival, the two together, that is to say the religious philosophy behind the psalm together with the identification of its Sitz im Leben, constitute a sound analysis of the meaning of Psalm cxxxii.

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1. Loc. cit.

Aspects of the Zion concept presented in the psalm.

1. Recall of the history of the ark; probably the commencement of a procession in which the ark was borne to Mount Zion (vv. 6-7).
2. Appeal to God to go to his settled place (on Zion), probably representing the original move of the ark to Zion and the foundation of the temple there (v. 8).
3. The election of Zion recapitulated (vv. 13-14).

Associated themes indirectly related to the Zion concept.

1. Petition for the sake of David and his work in trying to find a place for God to dwell. Appeal to David's oath (vv. 1b-5).
2. Appeal for blessing on the king, priests and people (vv. 9-10).
3. Election of David recapitulated, a probable reference to Nathan's prophecy (vv. 11-12).
4. Answer to the supplication and a further promise to the king, including a promise of the continuation of the line and of victory for the king (vv. 15-18).

Concluding comment on the Zion concept in Psalm cxxxii

The psalm illustrates the interrelatedness of Zion as God's chosen dwelling place and of Zion as the seat of the Davidic kings. In the sphere of space and time Yahweh has chosen one specific place and one specific family to act as the vehicles of his will, to act as the symbols of his universal rule over the cosmos.

In earlier psalms it has been shown that Yahweh's dwelling on Mount Zion represented the immanent aspect of his being, as opposed to his otherness and transcendence. The concrete sign of this presence on Zion is here understood to be the ark of the covenant. The ark's history is, therefore, vitally important and David's part in bringing the ark to Jerusalem is likewise of no little importance. From the time when Jerusalem first became the capital city of Israel the ark, as a manifestation of God's presence, was closely associated with David, the Lord's anointed king. The recapitulation of the election of Zion and of the Davidic house as presented in the psalm was probably a central idea in the autumn festival and thus, year by year, perpetuated two tremendous theological concepts by proclamation and by action. The evidence suggests that an actual ark procession took place each year and it is a fair deduction that the Davidic king would take a leading part in this ritual.

Also prominent in the psalm is the assumption that God's blessing is related to his election of Zion and of David. Because Yahweh has chosen Zion he will ensure that the priests and people who belong to Zion will prosper. Similarly, because he has chosen David, the representatives of the royal line will receive the divine grace on behalf of all the people, provided that the covenant agreement is kept by the reigning king.

## The Zion-Jerusalem concept in other psalms

Zion is frequently mentioned in other psalms over and above those which have Zion as the main theme. This is natural when it is considered that the psalter developed from worship in the temple on Mount Zion. It also means that it is impossible to review a Zion ideology only by examining specific Zion psalms. It is perhaps true that an incidental mention of Zion may simply confirm an aspect of the ideology which is already evident in the Zion psalms, but the fact that such mention appears in a psalm of a different category may give added significance to the concept.

It is proposed first to examine four passages of fairly substantial length in which the Zion concept is prominent. Then, an examination will be made of approximately twenty five other references to Zion. The four main passages are: Psalms lxxiv 1-8, lxxviii 67-72, lxxix 1-4 and cii 13-23. Only general discussion will be undertaken at this point, but for the sake of completeness each passage is analysed in detail in Appendix 1.

Psalm lxxiv is a communal lament with a hymnic section, a not uncommon feature of laments. Its historical background is the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. The main theme is a lament for Jerusalem, but elements of hope do appear. It was possibly used on the temple site during and after the Exile. It relies partly on the Zion tradition.

The psalm opens with a complaint to God about the treatment of the chosen people whom God has apparently



abandoned (v. 1b). In v. 2 the basis for the complaint and appeal are given as the Israelites' special relationship with God. This is associated with an appeal for the enemies, who have despoiled the sanctuary, to be defeated (v. 3). Two strands of the Heilsgeschichte appear together in v. 2: (a) The redemption and formation of Israel in Egypt. (b) The Zion tradition of God's presence. In vv. 4-8 the temple's destruction and the despoiling of other sacred sites in the area are described in detail.

In vv. 12-17 a hymn in praise of God as creator and redeemer is associated with the lament. Myth and history meet in allusions to the chaos myth and the Red Sea tradition. In vv. 18-23 a renewed appeal for help is made. This is based on the covenant tradition.

This psalm is important because it shows that the Zion concept had left an indellible mark on the survivors of the tragedy of the fall of Jerusalem. To the writer of the psalm it seemed incredible that God should abandon Zion.

Psalm lxxix is also a communal lament and it is a parallel psalm to Psalm lxxiv. It describes the situation of the people of God after the fall of Jerusalem. Strong faith is shown in traditional salvation history but this is tempered by a belief in the necessity for repentance. The psalm may have been used on the temple site during and after the Exile.

In v. 1 there is a description of the foreign invasion. The defiling of the temple and the destruction of Jerusalem are mentioned. In vv. 2-3 the slaughter of the covenant



people is described in vivid terms. In v. 4 there is a complaint about the derision of neighbouring nations. The cause of this calamity is attributed to God's anger; therefore, a need for repentance is recognized (vv. 5-9). An appeal for God's help shows continued faith in Zion as a place where God's power is manifested (vv. 11-13).

This psalm shows the persistence of Israel's election consciousness even after the fall of Jerusalem.

Psalm cii is an individual lament, probably with communal significance. It also contains hymnic ingredients. The lament over Jerusalem by an individual representing the community may have been used by congregations of the late Exile and afterwards. The hymn (vv. 13-23) shows great confidence that Zion will be restored. The hymn contains similarities both to other laments (Psalms xxii, lxix, lxxi) and to Deutero-Isaiah.

The basic contents of this hymn are as follows. God is described as being enthroned for ever, presumably on the heavenly Zion (v. 13). He will listen to the prayers of the destitute (v. 18); he will raise up Zion, and kings and nations will reverence his name and his glory (vv. 14-7, 19-20). The similarities to Deutero-Isaiah in vv. 14, 16, 19, 20, 22, and 23 may show the psalm's dependence on that writer. On the other hand, the reverse could be the case, and Psalm cii may represent an important link between the psalms and Deutero-Isaiah. It is of interest for this study that a transcendental faith in God's power in Zion may be present despite the failure of the dogma that the earthly Zion was inviolable.

Psalm lxxviii is a didactic poem of uncertain date, though an appropriate background would be the late eighth century. In general it is a recital of sacral history culminating in the associated themes of the election of David and of Zion.

In a review of history from the Exodus to the Settlement the northern kingdom is shown to have been disobedient to God's covenant; as a result God has allowed disaster to fall on Shiloh (vv. 1-66). Instead of Ephraim-Joseph and Shiloh God has, therefore, chosen Judah and Zion (v. 68). Zion is an exalted place founded, like the earth, for ever (v. 69). Finally, David is shown to have been a good shepherd to Jacob-Israel (vv. 70-72).

There are three main factors apparent in the psalm. Firstly, the Heilsgeschichte is shown to be continuous. Secondly, Zion is presented as the true bearer of the Shiloh tradition. Thirdly, Zion is warned to keep a pure religion and to hold to the covenant.

In a general appraisal of other relevant psalms, it is apparent that aspects of the Zion concept mentioned can be arranged into several groups. In a number of places, for example, it is confirmed that God's dwelling place is on Zion. Psalm ix, which may be an integral part of Psalm x, is a hymn of praise and thanksgiving for victory. Salvation is from God, who dwells in Zion. He is enthroned as judge of all nations and helps those who are afflicted. Psalm xv concerns fellowship with God. Those who are upright will dwell with God in his tent and on his holy hill. This psalm may well be a processional

liturgy. Psalm(s) xlii-iii is an individual lament occasioned by an enforced absence from the temple, where the writer was accustomed to take a leading part in worship. He wishes to go back to God's dwelling on His holy hill, so that he may praise God with his lyre and partake of the joys of divine fellowship. Psalm lxv is a hymn in praise of God's acts of creation and salvation. God is in Zion and anyone who is chosen to dwell in his courts will be blessed. Psalm lxviii is a hymn of victory which may have been associated with the autumn festival. The many peaked mountain of Bashan is said to look with envy at the mount which God has chosen for his dwelling. The victory celebrations apparently included a procession with musical accompaniment which led into the sanctuary. Psalm cxxxv is a hymn in praise of creation and of God's saving acts. The latter include the events of the Exodus and Settlement. The congregation is invited to bless this God, so different from man-made gods, for his wonderful deeds. He is the One who dwells in Zion and in Jerusalem.

Two royal psalms show clearly that the Davidic king was enthroned on Zion and, therefore, received his power from God himself. Psalm ii 6 states, "I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill". The king's power is thus closely associated with God's power and he is regarded as ruler of the world. In Psalm cx 2 it is even more clear that God has given the king his power from Zion. The king is even said to sit at God's right hand (v. 1). From that position he rules over all his enemies.

Zion is quite often associated with God's saving power. Psalm iii may possibly be a royal psalm in the form of an individual lament. At any rate, help is said to come from God's holy hill (v. 5) for an individual who is beset by foes. Psalm xiv (cf. Psalm liii) is a prayer for deliverance. The setting seems to be in an era of corruption. It is assumed that deliverance for Israel will come out of Zion. Psalm xx, a royal psalm, is a prayer for the king's victory. In v. 3 a request is made that God should send help from Zion. Psalm cxxix looks back with thanksgiving to God's help for Israel on past occasions. There is also an imprecation against the wicked who are defined as those who hate Zion.

In some texts God is envisaged as saving or building Zion itself. Psalm li is probably a royal psalm in the form of an individual lament which has penitence as the theme. It is traditionally associated with David's sorrow over Uriah's death. An important idea in the psalm is that the only worthy sacrifice is a broken and contrite heart. Because of the appeal to build the walls of Jerusalem, some commentators would date the psalm between 584-444 B.C. On the other hand, the appeal could be figurative of God's strengthening power among Jerusalem's congregation. Psalm lxix, like Psalms xxii and cii, contains both lament (vv. 1-30) and thanksgiving (vv. 31-37). The psalm is an individual lament which seems to be concerned with the difficulties of the community. It may be that the individual is the king, the people's representative before God. It has been suggested that

the psalm could be Exilic, post-Exilic or perhaps dated in the time of Hezekiah. At any rate, God is praised as one who will save Zion and build the cities of Judah. Unlike Psalms xxii and cii there is no universalism here, except with reference to God's dominion over the natural world. Rather is Zion to be saved for the children of God's servants. Psalm cxxvi could be regarded from a superficial viewpoint as describing the joy of returning from the Exile. The restored fortunes of Zion are remembered with joy. A prayer is then made that God will restore the present fortunes of the people; confidence is expressed that this will come about. It is quite possible, however, that the psalm is not historically based; it may, indeed, present the themes of the autumn festival which was the time for celebrating the renewal of the year and its material and spiritual blessings. Psalm cxlvii is a hymn to God the saviour and creator. He is the One who builds up Jerusalem (v. 2) and gathers the outcasts of Israel. While the psalm could be related to the Exile, it could just as well have symbolic significance. When the Hebrew genius for transforming historical experience into theological systems is considered, it is difficult to draw the line between the two.

Zion is also linked to God's blessing. Psalm cxxxiii is a wisdom psalm related, perhaps, to the covenant community. It praises the fellowship of Zion. God is described as having commanded the blessing and everlasting life ( בְּרָכָה ) upon Zion. In fact, as Psalm cxxviii states, the whole וְכָל חַיֵּינוּ of life comes with God's blessing

from Zion (vv. 5-6). This wisdom psalm seems to be a priestly blessing on the congregation and may have been used at the autumn festival. Certainly, the blessings of fertility are mentioned (vv. 2-3). Psalm cxxxiv seems to be a summons to a night vigil. It ends with a benediction in which God the creator is asked to bless those present, from Zion. Psalm cxlvii (see above) also associates God's blessing of Zion with security and peace (cf. vv. 12-14).

Psalm cxxv, a national psalm of confidence, affirms that Zion is immovable. Those who trust in God will be likewise immovable (vv. 1-2). Verse 3 may imply that the psalm was written during a period of foreign domination as when Assyria was in the ascendant, but this is not very likely. There may, however, be a prophetic element in the psalm, as in the oracles of Isaiah of Jerusalem about Zion's inviolability.

In Psalm xcix, an enthronement psalm, God is enthroned in Zion, by implication. He is seated on the cherubim and is judge over all peoples. From Zion God rules over the whole cosmos. He is a mighty and holy King who loves justice. In Psalm xi 4 the Lord's throne is said to be in heaven, but this is in parallel with the statement that the Lord is in his temple. In Psalm L, which is associated with renewal of the covenant, God is described in an epiphany from Zion: "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth" (v. 2). This is accompanied by typical theophanic manifestations, a devouring fire and a mighty tempest (v. 3), and is set in the context of judgment.

There are some texts where Zion may represent the community (cf. Deutero-Isaiah). In Psalm ix, a hymn of praise and thanksgiving, God lifts up a suffering individual so that he rejoices "in the gates of the daughter of Zion" (vv. 14-15). This may simply refer to the temple or the city. On the other hand, it could be a personification of the Jerusalem community. The area before the gates of the city was the centre of public life. Psalm cxlvi is a hymn with an element of wisdom teaching. In v. 10 Zion is addressed as a person. It seems reasonable to conclude that this refers to the community of Zion. In another hymn, Psalm cxlvii, Zion-Jerusalem is invited to praise God (v. 12). While it is true that the Hebrew poets often addressed inanimate objects as persons and expected them to dance and sing, it seems likely here that Zion has a corporate personality which includes its inhabitants. Psalm cxlix, a hymn of vengeance which may be symbolic rather than historical or eschatological, invites the sons of Zion (= Israel) to rejoice in their king, in this case, God. This is a firm example of Zion's inclusive personality. Nevertheless, such personifications of Zion are rare in the psalms.

Only in one psalm is there a specific reference to the Babylonian Exile. Psalm cxxxvii, though it may indeed be post-Exilic, represents the exiles as mourning for Zion (v. 1), which they remember poignantly. There is also a reference in v. 3 to the "songs of Zion" which can only refer to songs sung in (or about) Zion before the Exile. As evidence to the contrary is lacking, it can be assumed

with reasonable confidence that these songs included some of those under discussion.



Conclusion to the discussion of the Zion concept in the psalms.

During the discussion, seven complete psalms have been examined closely. In addition, several short sections of psalms have been discussed, as well as about thirty brief references to Zion dispersed throughout the psalter. Is it justifiable to group all these allusions together in an attempt to formulate a typical Zion ideology? The main justification for this is that the Zion temple must have been the Sitz im Leben for all of the psalms which make such mention of Zion. At the same time, of course, many other psalms must have originated from Zion. It is not surprising that these psalms include a variety of types. Yet the main assessment of the investigation must be based on the seven Zion (or closely allied) songs, namely, Psalms xlvi, xlviii, lxxvi, lxxxiv, lxxxvii, cxxii and cxxxii; while other allusions to Zion may provide supporting evidence.

The common factor which relates these seven psalms is an intense interest in Zion-Jerusalem and the temple. Perhaps more interesting is the fact that in the discussions on each psalm it has been concluded that each was probably used at the main festival of the year, to wit, the Feast of Tabernacles or the autumn festival. Scholars have variously referred to this festival as the autumn festival, the New Year Festival,<sup>1</sup> the Enthronement Festival<sup>2</sup> or the Covenant Festival,<sup>3</sup> but these labels merely serve to define important themes celebrated during

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1. Mowinckel, H.T.C., pp. 80ff.; Johnson, S.K., p. 57.

2. Mowinckel, Loc. cit.

3. Weiser, The Psalms, pp. 63ff.

the festival. According to the results of this investigation, the festival could just as well be described as a Zion Festival - but this temptation will be resisted. The festival will be referred to as the Feast of Tabernacles or as the autumn festival, a fairly neutral title.

The main evidence for the content of the Feast of Tabernacles, apart from the festival calendars,<sup>1</sup> lies in the psalter. The main themes of the festival can be surmised from the so-called enthronement psalms and royal psalms as well as from the Zion psalms. This, however, need not mean any more than the assumption that these psalms were used during festival week.

Evidence for ceremonial practices is scanty, though there is prima facie evidence for two types of procession. As the discussion on Psalm cxxxii has shown, there was probably a procession in which the ark was carried up to Zion's temple. Further, as Psalm xlvi shows, there was probably a ceremonial inspection of the city's defences. It is extremely significant that these two processions are related to the two most important facets of the Zion concept. First of all, God as symbolized by the ark resided on Mount Zion. Secondly, as a result of this presence, the security of the city was celebrated.

Theories about other ceremonial acts are much less firmly based. As has been shown in relation to the discussion on Zion's inviolability and the defeat of the

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1. See Ex. xxiii 14-17; Deut. xvi; Lev. xxiii; Num. xxviii-xxix.

attacking nations or kings (cf. Psalms xlvii 7, xlviii 5-8), the theory that a ritual combat took place has little support from the Old Testament, though parallel practices in other countries of the Ancient Near East give the theory some credibility. It is quite possible that during the reigns of apostatizing kings like Manasseh, customs from neighbouring countries were more influential, while under Hezekiah and Josiah, for example, it would be less likely that alien customs were used. In fact, it is likely that customs and ceremonies varied greatly between the tenth and sixth centuries. Even so it is fair to assume that the central themes belonging to the festival's celebrations would persist and grow over the years, and that new psalms would be written in order to incorporate developing theological ideas. It can be argued strongly that during the seventh century theological ideas related to the Zion sanctuary reached a peak of evolution. In all probability, the reign of Josiah can be taken as the ideal period for the fruition of this development. This would mean that the content of the Zion concept outlined in this investigation probably existed in full at that time, whereas in any earlier period it would be difficult to define the stage of development reached.

The main themes of the Feast of Tabernacles, then, are probably well illustrated by the Zion psalms, and at the same time additional evidence can be obtained from other psalms, especially the royal and enthronement psalms. These themes, as presented in the Zion psalms, may be

classified as follows:

(a) Yahweh's presence on his holy mountain, both on earth and in heaven, is symbolized by the ark in sanctuary.

(b) Yahweh's lordship over time and space (history and the cosmos) is illustrated, for example, by the defeat of the attacking nations and the victory over chaos; and is also symbolized in his universal rule from Mount Zion.

(c) The Davidic kingship is also based on Mount Zion where the renewal of the covenant takes place.

(d) Thanksgiving for blessings which emanate from Mount Zion and love for Mount Zion are expressed by acts of pilgrimage and worship.

The common factor in all of these themes and, indeed, the key to any understanding of the Zion concept, lie in the belief that Yahweh dwelt on Mount Zion.

The main sources for the origin of these themes may be classified as follows:

(a) Mythical. It has been shown that some of the central themes have their origin in myths that were generally current in the Ancient Near East. These are: the holy mountain myth, the river of paradise myth and the myth of the victory over the powers of chaos.

(b) Historical. It has been shown that in some Zion psalms there is evidence of the handing on of pre-Settlement traditions, namely, the traditions of the Exodus, the Red Sea and the Wilderness wanderings (cf. Psalms lxxvi 7, lxxiv 2, lxxviii). These traditions were incorporated into the developing Zion tradition. Then, of course, there is the tradition associated with Zion itself. The origin of the theme concerning the attacking nations probably lies

in a generalization of historical events. During the centuries Jerusalem was often by-passed by vast armies and sometimes besieged, but did not, in fact, fall until 587 B.C. This record must have contributed substantially to the idea that Zion was inviolable.


(c) Prophetic. There was probably some interchange of ideas between the developing cult tradition and the prophecies of, for example, Isaiah and Micah. This would be especially true of the inviolability concept.

The cult tradition itself can scarcely be seen as a source of themes for the Zion concept. It was rather the medium by which other themes were transformed into a body of theological propositions, as illustrated by the Zion psalms. The cult tradition represents a building in which various mythical, historical and prophetic elements were inserted, bound together and transmuted by the cement of poetic and religious inspiration. The architecture of the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

The content of the Zion concept may now be summarized using the main categories listed above as guide lines.

(a) Zion-Jerusalem is well attested as Yahweh's dwelling place. Jerusalem is "the city of God, the holy dwelling of the highest" (xlvi 5). In this "city of our God, upon his holy hill", Yahweh is great and "highly to be praised" (xlvi 2). Zion is defined as "the hill of Zion, Zaphon's utmost peak, the city of the mighty king" (xlvi 3). Psalm xcix 1-2, part of an enthronement psalm, further defines Yahweh as the king who dwells on Zion. The basic idea that God dwells on Zion is repeated frequently

(cf. ix 11, xi 4, xv 1, xliii 1, l 2, lxv 1, lxviii 15-16, cxxxv 21). Not only does Yahweh dwell there, but he "loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwelling places of Jacob" (lxxxvii 2). This city which he has founded "stands on the mountain of the river of holiness" (lxxxvii 1b).

The complex of ideas which surrounds Zion as the holy mountain is well summarized in Psalm xlvi 2-4. Zion is identified with Zaphon, the mysterious mountain of the north which, in Is. xiv, is described as the place of the assembly of the gods. Zion is also identified with the city of the mighty king. This undoubtedly refers to Jerusalem as the centre of God's kingdom. In the definition of Zion should also be included the fact that it was regarded as the heavenly mountain and dwelling place of God; that the earthly mountain was a copy of God's heavenly dwelling, the two being identified in a mystical sense; that it was a universal and cosmic centre from which God ruled. The word  in Psalm xlvi 3, 9, 10, 11, is closely related to the holy mountain and has local as well as universal connotations. These represent the local mountain and the world mountain which can be interpreted as the immanent and transcendent expressions of God's presence.

The presence of the ark in the Zion sanctuary, allied to the consciousness that this was God's elect dwelling place, are both important factors in the Zion ideology. David's part in finding a dwelling place for God is emphasized (cxxxii 1b-5), the history of the ark and its

move to Zion are recalled (cxxxii 6-8) and the same psalm, along with Psalms xxiv and lxviii, probably represent a hieros logos for the founding of the sanctuary. In a similar way, Psalm lxxviii legitimizes the election of Zion as God's dwelling as opposed to the claims of the sanctuary at Shiloh. This election is seen in Psalm lxxviii as the culmination of sacral history from the Exodus onwards.

No doubt this theme of Zion's election was thought important enough to warrant an annual procession up to Mount Zion in a dramatic presentation of the original founding of the sanctuary.

(b) Yahweh's lordship over history and over the cosmos is integral to the Zion ideology. Psalm xlvi 3-4 pictures the return to chaos of the whole natural world. There is no need to fear, however, for Yahweh is in control of all these powers. This seems to be a reference to the Ancient Near Eastern myth of the conflict of the god with Yam (or Tiamat), the sea monster. The hymn in Psalm lxxiv 12-15 recalls this myth more clearly and illustrates the same faith in Yahweh's control over nature, even after the fall of Jerusalem.

Yahweh's control over history is firmly illustrated by the concept of the inviolability of Zion and the defeat of the nations and kings who attack this mighty stronghold. Descriptions of the mountain-city emphasize her strength and security. In Psalm lxxvi 3 the names "Zion" and "Salem" in parallel show that even in the titles for God's dwelling this theory is implicit, for together, these names probably mean "City of Safety and Security". (See in situ



in the commentary.) The same verse pictures Zion as the centre of Yahweh's war-like operations. Further, as Psalm xlvii states:

"God is in her midst; she shall never fall;

God will help her - and it will be soon!"

Even God himself is described as "a secure bastion" among the citadels of Jerusalem (xlviii 4). Jerusalem is "built as a city which is bound firmly together" (cxxii 3), a reference both to the closely knit, physical structure of the city and to the unity which God's presence brings.

"Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion,  
which cannot be moved, but abides for ever"

(cxxv 1-2).

While there may be an element of pre-Israelite influence in this belief, it is probable that the presence of the ark on Mount Zion was much more influential.

"The Lord of hosts is with us;

the God of Jacob is our safe resort"

(xlvii 8, 12).

The use of the title of God associated with the ark in the above chorus probably illustrates the influence of the ark. Moreover, Zion is frequently linked with God's saving power (cf. iii 5, xiv 7, xx 3, cxxix 5).

There are some more special references to Yahweh's defeat of the nations or kings who attack Zion, though none of these is specific enough to be able to state that a particular historical situation lies in the background. Even so, as has been noted above, the origin of this aspect of the Zion concept probably lies in the history of Jerusalem



over the hundreds of years when the city was strong enough to resist all attempts to assail it. As generalized in the cult, this defeat of attackers was brought about by the epiphany of Yahweh, variously described as Yahweh's "voice" (xlvi 7) or "rebuke" (lxxvi 7). Yahweh has only thus to speak and "kingdoms fail" and "the earth dissolves" (xlvi 7). An alliance of kings came before the city but as soon as they saw it,... "they were aghast; they panicked and took to flight" (xlvi 6). Such is the effect of this "city of the mighty king" upon all who attack her. God is the warrior who fights for Israel from his "covert" in Salem and his "retreat" in Zion:

"Terrible, majestic,  
you tear apart like a rushing torrent;  
powerful men are plundered,  
they sleep their sleep of death,  
and no warrior can stir a hand..." (lxxvi 5-6).

Associated with the victory of God over the nations is the notion that all weapons will be destroyed; that after the desolation of the world will follow the end of war. This is simply stated in Psalm lxxvi as the destruction of the enemies' weapons before Jerusalem:

"There, the lightning arrows of the bow,  
the shield, the sword - all weapons are broken"  
(v. 4).

In Psalm xlvi, however, this concept is universalized:

"Come and behold the acts of the Lord,  
what havoc he has caused on the earth;  
he shatters the bow and smashes the spear;

he burns the shield in the fire" (vv. 9-10).

One explicit result of the divine victory is that God will judge all nations from Zion. He is "raised high over the nations, raised high above the earth" (xlvi 11). His name, as his praise, "...resounds to the ends of the earth" and his "right hand is charged with justice" (xlvi 11). In Psalm lxxvi God's saving acts are related to the moral sphere:

"From the heavens you declare judgment;  
the earth fears and is pacified,  
when you, O God, arise to vindicate,  
to rescue all the earth's oppressed" (vv. 9-10).

This is followed by the statement that all earthly powers are subject to God's almighty power. He "severs the spirit of princes" and he is "the Terrible One to the kings of the earth" (v. 13).

There is, further, a statement of Zion's position as the universal mother of all nations and men. In Psalm lxxxvii, Zion-Jerusalem is described as the spiritual centre not only of Israel, but also of the whole world and of all individuals.

This picture of Zion as a universal centre and the description of God's victory and judgment over all nations transcend the geographical Jerusalem in its manifest historical development; go beyond the space-time continuum to the sphere of the eschaton. However, there is no full doctrine of eschatology here, though indeed the basic elements are present.

(c) The Davidic kingship is very closely associated

with Zion. "I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill", says Yahweh (ii 6, cf. cx 2). In Psalm cxxxii, whose main emphasis is on the recapitulation of the founding of the sanctuary, the theme of the election of the Davidic house is intertwined with the theme of Zion's election. In vv. 11-12 there is a probable reference to the Nathan prophecy. The continuation of the dynasty is seen as dependent on the keeping of the covenant (v. 12). The presence of the ark on Zion, closely associated with the presence of God himself, is regarded as a symbol of God's blessing on the king, and through his mediation, on the priests and people (vv. 8-10). The election of Zion and of David are also placed together in Psalm lxxviii. Zion, an exalted place, is founded like the earth, for ever, and is regarded as the true bearer of the old Shiloh tradition (vv. 68-69). David is shown to have been a good shepherd to Jacob-Israel (vv. 70-72). These statements appear at the end of a summary of Israel's history and are obviously regarded as the twin peaks of that history's development. In Psalm lxxxiv, a pilgrim psalm in praise of Zion, intercession for the king is made (vv. 9-10). This may indicate that at the Feast of Tabernacles prayers for the king were seen as instrumental in bringing about a good harvest and well-being for Israel. The juxtaposition of praise of David's house with prayers for the welfare of Jerusalem is found in Psalm cxxii. The Davidic throne is seen as a sign of judgment (v. 5) and also, as implied by the previous verse, as a sign of the unity of Israel.

The king, of course, was regarded as God's adopted son (ii 7) and, therefore, as vice-gerent of Yahweh, ruling from Mount Zion.

"The Lord is at your right hand;  
he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath"

(cx 5).

(d) Because of the blessings which flow from God's presence on Zion, the Zion psalms echo with the themes of praise and thanksgiving and are filled with expressions of love for the sanctuary and its environs. The most potent symbol for these blessings is the cosmic river described in Psalm xlvi:

"There is a river whose courses delight the  
city of God,

the holy dwelling of the highest" (v. 5).

This river is also mentioned in Psalm lxxxvii 1b, for his (God's) foundation stands "on the mountain of the river of holiness". It has been shown that the river theme has its origins in the paradise myth and that it also became a powerful vehicle for expressing the concept of God's blessing in prophetic writings.

It has already been noted in relation to the Davidic kingship that prayers for blessing are incorporated in the Zion psalms. This is emphasized in Psalm cxxii:

"Pray for the welfare of Jerusalem:  
may those who love you flourish!  
Prosperity be within your walls  
and security inside your towers!" (vv. 6-7).

This pilgrim psalm seems to be related to the festival of Tabernacles and the expectancy of blessings, both material and spiritual. The theme of blessing from Zion also receives specific mention in Psalms cxxxi 2, cxxviii 5 and cxxxiv 3.

Love of Zion and the delights of worshipping there are ideally expressed in Psalm lxxxiv:

"How much loved is your dwelling place,

O Lord of hosts!

My being yearns, languishes for the courts of the Lord;  
my body and soul cry out to the living God"

(vv. 2-3).

This psalm in praise of Zion also contains a hymn in praise of worship in the temple (vv. 11-12). True happiness can only come from faith in God, but both prosperity and happiness are related to upright moral behaviour. The psalm hopes for the blessing of the autumn rains and this can be seen on the material level in terms of a good harvest, and on the spiritual level as the bliss that results from pilgrimage to Zion (vv. 6-8).

Psalm cxxii also illustrates the joy of pilgrimage to Zion. The joy and delight of worship in Jerusalem are recalled (vv. 1b-2) and the blessings of Zion are seen as spreading out to all parts of Israel whither pilgrims return after the festival. The unity of the tribal federation through the central sanctuary is idealized.

Thanksgiving is also expressed for the divine victory and for the vindication of "the earth's oppressed". This is shown in joyful worship on Zion and specifically by the

presentation of votive offerings (vv. 11-12). Again, following on the theme of deliverance, praise of the God who dwells in Zion is joyfully expressed.

"We have pondered your constant love, O God,  
within your temple.

Your name, as your praise,  
resounds to the ends of the earth;  
and your right hand is charged with justice.

May the hills of Zion rejoice..." (xlviii 10-12a).

Love of Zion and thankfulness for deliverance are symbolized in the procession round the walls of the city; and are so deeply felt that the people are exhorted to "declare to the coming generation" the nature of this God who dwells on Zion (xlviii 13-15).

The individual personal joy, so clearly shown in Psalm lxxxiv, cannot really be separated from the joy or brotherhood experienced in the fellowship of Israel's community, whose representatives meet regularly during the year, but more especially at the Feast of Tabernacles. This is well illustrated in Psalm cxxii:

"I was overjoyed when they said to me

'Let us go to the house of the Lord'" (cxxii 1b).

This, of course, is followed by the picture of Jerusalem as a closely bound structure where all the tribes of Israel worship together and give thanks to the Lord's name (vv. 3-4).

The capacity of Zion to symbolize the community seems to lead in a few texts to the notion of Zion as a corporate personality. This is most clearly shown in the phrase

"sons of Zion" in Psalm cxlix 2. However, the personification of Zion as a "daughter" (ix 14-15) and the address "O Zion" in Psalms cxlvi 10 and cxlvii 12 may also express the communal dimension of the Zion concept which appears more explicitly, for example, in Deutero-Isaiah. It is noteworthy that each of these references is connected with the joy of worship in Zion.

The above summary of the content of the Zion concept probably represents the fulness of its growth in the century before the Exile. At that time it must have seemed to the inhabitants of Jerusalem that the presence of God on Zion guaranteed the city's immunity to attack for all time. Yet, the classical prophets from Amos to Jeremiah warned against God's impending judgment and castigated the popular religion for its easy confidence in Yahweh's protective power. Almost to the end, as the story of Jeremiah illustrates, this message fell upon deaf ears. The reformation of Josiah had further hardened this crust of delusion. What could possibly happen to the Zion community if worship were continued in the prescribed way, Yahweh being honoured in his long established sanctuary? But "...my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord" (Is. lv 8). At the time it took the tortured genius of a Jeremiah to perceive what God's way was going to be, to foretell that the theological structure associated with the Jerusalem cult was about to collapse with the city.



Remarkably, the power of the Zion concept was such that even after the destruction of the temple, as described in Psalms lxxiv 4-8 and lxxix 1-4, it was possible for faith to remain. The two main strands of the Heilsgeschichte, namely the Exodus tradition and the Zion tradition, persist in Psalm lxxiv 2. In a hymn which relieves the sadness of the lament, God's power as creator and redeemer (vv. 12-17) forms the basis of an appeal for help (vv. 18-23). Similarly, in Psalm lxxix an appeal for God's help shows continued faith in Zion as a place where God's power will be manifest, while the consciousness of Israel's election persists (vv. 11-13). It is also recognized that God's anger is just and that repentance is required (vv. 5-9).

It has been shown that there were transcendental elements in the Zion concept, that God was understood to sit on a heavenly throne on the cosmic mountain, Zaphon, of which Zion was a copy. It was perhaps inevitable that the destruction of Jerusalem should lead to more emphasis on God's transcendental dwelling on the holy mountain. This is illustrated in another lament, Psalm cii. The hymn (vv. 13-23) contains enthronement themes (v. 13) and shows faith that God will raise up Zion, that kings and nations will reverence his name and his glory (vv. 14-17, 19-20). Similarities in Deutero-Isaiah (cf. vv. 14, 16, 19, 20, 22, 23) make an Exilic date for this psalm suspect. On the other hand, it is possible that the psalmist used already existing psalms, that Psalm



cii was written before Deutero-Isaiah and that, if known by him, it influenced his thought. This is an open question which, however, leads conveniently to the second part of the investigation, the study of the Zion concept in Deutero-Isaiah.